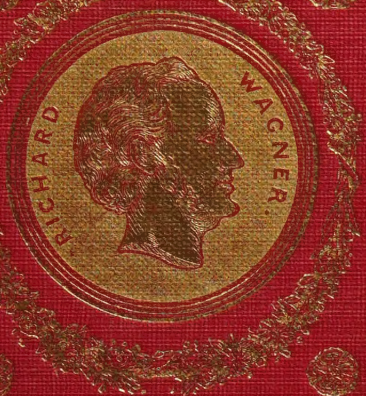
RICHARD WAGNER



HIS LIFE AND WORKS

ADOLPHE JULLIEN

THE MUSE.

RICHARD WAGNER

His Life and Works

BY

ADOLPHE JULLIEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

FLORENCE PERCIVAL HALL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

B. J. LANG

ILLUSTRATED WITH FIFTEEN PORTRAITS OF RICHARD WAGNER, AND ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN TEXT-CUTS; SCENES FROM HIS OPERAS; VIEWS OF THEATRES; AUTOGRAPHS AND NUMEROUS CARICATURES

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TO MY FRIEND

FANTIN-LATOUR

RICHARD WAGNER.

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WAGNER COMPOSING.

The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, — London, June 9. 1877.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

N view of the fact that almost the whole of our English Wagneriana has come from Germany, this French biography is of uncommon interest. The standpoint from which Jullien writes is absolutely new — his history of the Paris *Tannhäuser* episode in Wagner's life being of itself a matter of very great interest, coming as it does from a Parisian who was one of the participants. The illustrations are authentic and of great value. While a collection of Wagner caricatures would make a large volume by itself, the examples here given are eminently well chosen and throw a fantastic and suggestive light over the admirably written picture of this wonderful man's life.

It seems to be peculiarly fitting that a translation into English of Jullien's Life of Richard Wagner should come to publication in the United States. Nothing pleased Wagner more than the knowledge that his works were becoming well known in this country. His interest in America led him to turn his thoughts in this direction as a possible refuge in the period of his life when adversity followed him like a shadow.

In later years, when both fame and wealth were abundantly his, he sent to the United States a proposition full of practical detail, having for its end the removal of himself and his

family to this country, where he purposed devoting the remainder of his life to the composition of new works and their dedication to this country exclusively. However remarkable such a proposition may seem, the fact that it was made in downright earnest is none the less interesting to Americans.

This superb volume has many features that would have warmly commended it to Wagner; in turn, these same characteristics must make it right welcome to the English reading world. That this work will be keenly appreciated by our American public would seem inevitable: a public that has been unfailing in its enthusiastic devotion to "the master."

B. J. LANG.

Boston, Mass., April, 1892.

PREFACE.

T has been nearly four years since Richard Wagner was suddenly stricken down. Does his death date back far enough to enable us to put ourselves in a position to judge the man in all impartiality? Has the hour at last arrived to accord to this great genius the full measure of justice which his most savage detractors promised him after his death, but which, it seems, they would still like to defer until after their own? Apparently, for the great mass of French auditors, no longer occupying themselves with the paltry spites of writers in love with their own prose, or moved by petty commercial interests, have openly made reparation to Richard Wagner for the injuries that were heaped upon him during his life, and the French public, taken as a whole, has shown itself much more generous, much more just, than certain jealous, fanatical and rancorous individuals. One may say to-day that Wagner, even in France, has won his rightful place; the dissenting voices are now very few. Formerly, to defend him was to make one's self conspicuous; now, to disparage him has that effect.

This rehabilitation was not fully and strikingly produced until after the master's death had quieted all susceptibilities; but for some time before, it was easy to foresee, from certain

indications, that the mind of fortune was going to shift, and the numerous writers who always contrive to put themselves in accord with the momentary preferences of the public, cunningly planned their conversion in time to laud to the skies a man, an artist, upon whom they had for many years inflicted the most cruel outrages. The public, en masse, *makes no such calculations; it changes front in a day, and is disturbed very little by having its judgments of yesterday flung in its face. It simply denies them without hesitation, and with the best faith in the world. But it is quite otherwise with those who wield the pen, and it is no small matter for them to seem consistent with themselves while giving their astonished readers a complete change of opinion.*

This reaction in favor of a genius too long misunderstood has necessarily given rise to hosts of books, articles and pamphlets, each more laudatory than the last, on the subject of Richard Wagner. Excess of blame has been instantly succeeded by exaggeration of eulogium, and the blindness of hatred has given way, in more than one case, to the blindness of fetichism. What a deluge of critical, historical, anecdotic, apologetic, dithyrambic articles or studies on Richard Wagner since the time of the appearance of Tannhäuser *at Paris! And yet where can people find the circumstantiated information which they are always desirous to possess about a man of genius, and which they have a right to demand of any serious work, outside the current chronicle? Nowhere, if they be restricted to writings published in the French language; for Gasperini's interesting article, aside from the fact that it stops with* Tristan and Isolde, *is rather meagre in its proportions, and not very dependable as to its historical facts. And how*

many French writers have since then pretended to enlighten us on the subject, who have served us up, one after another, the same rhetorical developments, seasoned with a grain of poetry, a suspicion of the æsthetic! To-day, philosophy is the fashion, and one can lay no claim to understanding Wagner, if he believe that the master's works were made merely to be performed. By no means! Writers comment on them until they render them unintelligible, and then they are satisfied.

It is so much easier and more expeditious to let the pen run at random in regard to a man or his work, without having heard the work nor studied the man, than to make careful researches into the circumstances of an artist's life which have accompanied the production of his works, and to keep always to the just point of criticism and eulogium, shunning alike laudatory, dithyrambic hyperbole, and spiteful, injurious censure. As to analyses of lyric productions, there are more of them than we want, it seems to me. But it is far less easy to find a work in which the life and the productions of a bold innovator are described and studied from beginning to end; where one may follow at the same time the life of the man and the career of the artist, from the day of his birth to that of his death.

Not only does there exist no work of this kind in our own tongue, but, even in foreign languages, one does not know where to find a single one which will satisfy the conditions of independence and impartiality necessary in order to make the work of interest and value. Indeed, the German biographies conforming to this general plan are conceived in such a spirit of admiration and carried out in such a laudatory style that one detects on every page the direct influence and the permanent stamp of the master or of his representatives. Each

author, in taking up his pen, has laid aside his own personality, and has put himself, in a manner, at the disposal of the artist whose life he has undertaken to write; thus not only do his estimates lose all weight, but the simplest material facts are presented in such a fashion that one instinctively distrusts them, and accepts them only after minute verification. On every page one feels the presence of a partial hand, and such books, it seems to me, do not contribute to the master's glory; on the contrary they injure him, and render him disagreeable by their exaggeration of praise and abuse of flattery.

The best way, with such a genius, is to give an account of his life, and judge his actions and his works as if he had been dead fifty or sixty years, not loading him with extravagant encomiums which make him seem ridiculous in the eyes of sensible people; in a word, to write a book of history, and not a book of combat or of prejudice. Wagner, at the height of glory which he has attained, has no need for people to break their lances for him; he is well able to achieve his own victory, through the power of his genius and of his works. Enough, then, of books of combat. Enough of books of prejudice; we will have no more of them. For it would be showing a singularly narrow mind to rekindle old extinct quarrels, by republishing, for the sake of tormenting the critics, all their former judgments, so recently repudiated. And then what would be the object of it?

Surely, nothing would be easier for me than to make myself disagreeable to the writers who formerly led the attack against Richard Wagner, and I would be amply fitted out for this little war. It is not a rare thing at present to see people devotedly treasure up articles which are published about the mas-

ter whom they admire; but this is a recent fashion, and has developed only since Wagner's death. Let one look back but a few years, and he will find no trace of a collection of this kind. This is still more true of ten, fifteen, twenty years ago; at that time how singular such an idea would have seemed, and how entirely without interest would have been such a research! There are only two of us, I believe, who have been for a long time past collecting everything printed about Richard Wagner, whenever a new work called forth opinion, or a quarrel over him was surging in the musical world.

We were acting as simple collectors in undertaking this tedious task, and we had no suspicion of what usefulness, what value, such a collection of articles would acquire in after years. To-day, whether it be a question of the representation of Rienzi *at Paris, or the appearance of the* Nibelungen *at Bayreuth, on which we have scrupulously gathered in the least scraps from the French journals and a quantity of important articles from all the countries of Europe and of the New World; whether it be a question of the tumult raised at the Popular Concerts when M. Pasdeloup had the Siegfried funeral march performed, or of the conflict provoked quite recently by the announcement of* Lohengrin *at the Opera-Comique, — one may find, immediately, not only all the articles great and small from the professional critics, but the smallest jests, the slightest witticism which escaped from the pen of the chroniclers in merry mood, who remember them no longer, and who would scarcely laugh, to-day, if one were to amuse himself by recalling them to their minds.*

What a rich arsenal to draw from if it had been in my project to wound with their own arms those who fought the

hardest against Richard Wagner! But I am totally averse to giving to my book a character of retaliation. I prefer to observe a strict impartiality between Richard Wagner and his former detractors, and not to make use of the material in my possession for the purpose of entertaining the gallery at their expense; it would be doing them altogether too much honor, thus to give them a new lease of life under shelter of the great name of Wagner. Silence, then, in regard to those who took part in last year's polemics, and a truce to personalities. Let us aim first of all to have a book of history, as exact and complete as it is possible to make it, where formality shall be avoided, where verified anecdote shall have a place, where praise and criticism shall speak a language accessible to all; such a book, in short, as an independent admirer of the master ought to write.

It is to my mind an indispensable condition to a correct estimate of an artist like Wagner, to enjoy an absolute independence, and to be under no obligation, however small, which calls for a settlement. The man has lived, the work is immortal; there are all the elements necessary in order to judge him. But one may gather, besides, much detailed information from those who have been intimate with him, and to avail myself of such information, I have spared no effort. I have been careful, however, not to solicit the least scrap of information from those who would demand, in exchange, that I submit the entire work to their approval. An admirer of Wagner I certainly believe myself to be, and since I began to write — nearly twenty years ago — I have never ceased to defend him energetically, at the risk of drawing upon myself bantering attacks from the very writers who accuse me now of being too moderate and cautious;

but it is one thing to pen a militant article of criticism which is almost immediately forgotten, and another thing to write a volume of history on which the author claims that one may safely depend.

I am impelled, therefore, to write a work that is entirely impartial, not only towards Richard Wagner, but also towards those who, for one reason or another, have held him up to public ridicule and abuse. It belongs to the historian to discern the truth or the falsehood in such attacks, their origin or their hidden end, and afterwards, with a full cognizance of the facts, to pronounce between the artist and his enemies. This task is indispensable in the case of such a man as Richard Wagner; but it is a very delicate one, as may well be believed, and all the more difficult as nothing of the kind is to be found in all the biographical writings devoted to the master. With all the French or German writers, and even with Mr. Dannreuther, whose English article on Richard Wagner is one of the best, there is a want of calm scrutiny and of moderate judgment. There is no middle ground; it is all one way or all the other; either Wagner is a wretch or he is a martyr. But the absolute is not of this world, and in order to arrive at the relative truth concerning Richard Wagner and those who attacked him, it is not enough to scatter eloquence and high-sounding words; it is necessary to examine the question closely on every side, without bias, and, as far as possible, without illusion.

In order that such a work may put in its proper light the genius to whom it attempts to render a just homage, the products of the pencil must be given the important place due them as proofs of the opposition which the master encountered

in all countries, and the energy he was obliged to expend in order to overcome the numerous obstacles which defied his progress. Nothing shows so well as the caricature, which instantly attracts the eye, what a change has taken place in public opinion on the subject of Richard Wagner. The caricature, therefore, ought to be a valuable adjunct to the written text, and as no composer, not even Rossini nor Berlioz, has been a greater inspiration to the humor of his contemporaries, it was only a question of choosing from among the numberless caricatures of Germany, France and England, being careful to avoid those that were too gross or in the slightest degree injurious to persons still living.

I regard the caricature in the light of a historic document, aside from the more or less venomous thrusts which it directs against its subject. Besides, the caricature has become, in our century, one of the forms of celebrity, a striking proof of fame, and Wagner, who knew the fact, should not have viewed with an indifferent eye this deluge of facetious sketches inspired by himself and his works : in catching the attention of innumerable people who would never have had the time nor the taste to read an article, they did more to spread his name and fame than hundreds of writings could have done. In no instance has he protested against the parody, written or drawn, and if ever a satirical sketcher had believed it his duty to ask permission to burlesque him, he probably would not have replied like our great Lamartine, that one ought not to authorize anybody to caricature the face of man, the only creature made in the image of God.

To this series of caricatures I have added a series of scenes from the operas, and another of portraits. For the first, I

have made it a point to give at least one engraving contemporaneous with the original performances, in order to preserve to each piece the stamp of the times; for the second, my aim has been to collect the rarest portraits, and those to which the name of the artist and the date of the painting gave a particular importance, such as those of Herkomer and Renoir. It

RICHARD WAGNER, ABOUT 1840.
His first portrait, drawn by Ernest Kietz, at Paris.

has not been easy to arrange in exact order this long series of portraits. For some of them I have the precise date; for instance, those which were made in Paris, or London, and the one showing Wagner at the age of forty, about which Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel kindly informed me. For the others it has been impossible to get any exact information, even from

those who, it would seem, ought to know the most about Richard Wagner; their replies have been vague, or manifestly erroneous. So that I have been obliged, in inserting these doubtful portraits between those whose dates I knew, to be guided by modifications in the physiognomy and the changes in the style of the clothing. I dare to entertain a slight hope that I have established an exact relative order for all the portraits inserted in the text, but I cannot guarantee it.

At the last moment I have received Wagner's first portrait, by Kietz, which I have been vainly seeking in all directions, and which I deem myself fortunate to be able to make figure in the preface. This portrait was made at Paris, in 1840 or 1841, by Ernest Kietz, a young Dresden artist who was studying painting at the studio of Delaroche, and whom Wagner had the good fortune to meet at Paris during his first stay among us. Here we have Wagner at twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age. The portrait which I have given on page 51, supposing it to be the first, and perhaps that of Kietz, was made two or three years later, and gives us Richard Wagner at about thirty; the date indicated is therefore correct. It seems that Kietz, author of Wagner's first portrait, after having spent the best part of his life in Paris, from 1830 to 1870, has now gone back to his native city. It was his brother, the sculptor Gustave Kietz, who made at Bayreuth, in 1873, the two white marble busts which adorn the lower hall of Wahnfried.

In preparing this work, I have been obliged for illustrations as well as for the text, to have recourse to a great number of people with a view of obtaining from them useful information, and I am happy to say that, almost without excep-

tion, I have encountered only obliging attention and good will. For the caricature part, which has such a great importance in my eyes, I am much indebted to M. John Grand-Carteret, author of the excellent History of the Caricature, in Germany, Austria and Switzerland; *and M. Emerich Kastner, the great Wagnerian collector of Vienna, has also given me very valuable assistance. In general, all the managers of caricature papers and satirical publications have shown the greatest kindness and courtesy, — those of* Charivari *and* Triboulet *in France; the German editors of* Kikeriki *and* Floh, *at Vienna; MM. Braun and Schneider, of the* Fliegende Blätter, *at Munich; M. Heck, of Vienna, for the caricatures of Gualtier, Gaul, etc., etc. M. A. Hofmann, proprietor of the Kladderadatsch of Berlin, put at my disposal the whole humorous pamphlet,* Schulze and Müller Nibelungen Ring, *in which the amusing sketches are drawn by the principal artist of that celebrated sheet, M. W. Scholz.* Punsch, *of Munich, has also been a very useful sheet to consult for the period of Wagner's residence in that city; but here I address my thanks to a journal which has disappeared, an author who is dead, for the year 1875 witnessed the simultaneous demise of this satirical paper and its artist editor, Martin Schleich.*

To return to France, it gives me great pleasure to thank M. Charles Nuitter for his customary kindness in opening to me the Archives of the Opera; and my friend George Charpentier, who possessed the originals of certain drawings, like the portrait of Renoir; also MM. Charavay brothers, who have served me with an important portrait, and particularly those of my friends whose Wagnerian libraries, still better supplied than my own with articles, engravings or original

documents, were quite at my disposal. I have been careful always to indicate very exactly — when I could find it — the origin of the portraits, caricatures and other illustrations which it has seemed to me good to reproduce; and in the same way, I have successively noted in the course of the narrative all the works which have been of the slightest use to me in making my book. It would have been ungracious to pass over in silence the different French books which have treated of this rare genius, and rather than neglect a single one, it has pleased me to name them all, without undertaking here to criticise or to discriminate between their greater or less value; that, however, is evident.

Such as it is, with its inevitable imperfections, I submit this work to the enlightened admirers of Richard Wagner, begging them to excuse the defects which may have escaped me. It is for this class especially that the book has been written; but for all that, it would not displease me to interest those people of good faith for whom the Wagnerian work is still a closed letter, and to play for them the modest rôle — or immodest, as one prefers — which Goethe assigns to translators: "They are," says he, "zealous agents who extol to us the irresistible charms of a half-veiled beauty; they produce in our hearts an ardent longing to know the original."

And now that I have said all, a short fanfare *as at Bayreuth; let the curtain part, and let the master himself, before the representation of his own life — the agitated life of a hero of the art, — come to intercede with the public in behalf of his new historian!*

INTRODUCTION.

MOZART AND RICHARD WAGNER BEFORE THE FRENCH PEOPLE.

IT is now just ten years since, at the moment that the *Trilogy* was first performed at Bayreuth, the Figaro published a certain article to which it would be well to lend attention.

The lapse of ten years has in no wise diminished the force of this defence of a man accused of faults which he was not the only one to commit, but with which he alone was charged. So it seems to the author that he could not better commence this extensive work on Richard Wagner than by reproducing here without alteration, this short study to which there has never been any response save by empty declamations. But the facts are clear, and the texts are there; and no oratory, however eloquent, will hold against such irreproachable testimony.

Let us suppose, then, that we are still in the month of August, 1876.

The musical festivals which are soon to be held at Bayreuth, and which, whether triumph or failure, will remain one of the most audacious artistic attempts that has ever been seen, hold to-day the attention of all musical Europe fixed on this little town of Bavaria, and make once more a hero of this Richard Wagner, so much admired by some, so much

abhorred by others, and so scoffed at by the indifferent and idle throng.

Would it not be fitting to examine in all justice, without indulging in prejudice one way or the other, the grievances so often formulated against this composer, by those who carry this purely musical question into the noisy world of politics, without recalling the fact that others have written and have done still worse by us, and have nevertheless been admired and praised by all France? The question of genius or of talent is not for discussion here, and all dissertation would be idle in the face of decisive facts. We will therefore abstain from judging or even examining the theories and the creations of the German innovator, however great the charm which a careful examination would offer us.

Indeed, the artistic nature of Richard Wagner is so complex, his musical genius reveals such a vigor, and exercises such a charm, that in default of a profound knowledge of his works, people have recourse to the strangest comparisons for judging him, whether favorably or otherwise. This same year (1886), almost on the same day, a German composer likened him to Napoleon III. while a French journalist compared him to Bismarck; and both of them, the musician and the litterateur, the German and the Frenchman, believed that they had summed up Richard Wagner in this single comparison.

Let us preserve, at least as a matter of curiosity, these two portraits which so decidedly contradict each other.

Ferdinand Hiller, director of the Cologne Conservatory, and intimate friend of Mendelssohn — this ancient friendship explains his active hatred for Wagner, — wrote to the Deutsche Rundschau:

"In many respects Wagner resembles Napoleon III. Like him, he always had faith in his work, notwithstanding the most adverse circumstances. All the means which could

help him towards the goal of his aspirations, he has employed with a constancy and an energy which no musician has possessed before him to the same degree. Another point of resemblance between him and Napoleon, is that he was able to indissolubly bind his partisans to the success of his cause, while with regard to those whose self-seeking would tend to overshadow him, he managed to turn all their efforts to his own advantage. It is thus that he has arrived at a supreme power. As a climax to his brilliant career, the exposition at Bayreuth will follow in 1876 the Universal Exposition of Napoleon in 1867. Will Wagner also have a Sedan? It is difficult to believe; in the first place, until now, there has been no announcement in the musical world of the advent of a Bismarck or a Moltke. In the second place victories in the arts are not so quickly won as in the field.

"But his cause will end nevertheless by being vanquished, for it rests on false principles, like the power, formerly unquestioned, of Napoleon III."

On the other hand, what says the *XIX^e Siècle?*

"Richard Wagner is will, energy, and perseverance incarnate; like all who cling persistently to the pursuit of a fixed idea, he has long been regarded as a maniac. To-day, Bismarck and he, these two men whose characters, if not geniuses, have so many points of resemblance, are the idols of Germany. The élite of the French-hating and music-mad Germans is prostrate at their feet. Bismarck and Wagner have given proof in their two very different spheres of action, of the same absolute and systematic spirit, of the same passionate tenacity, of the same impetuousity of temperament, of the same absence of scruples in their choice of means to an end. The unity which the diplomat has accomplished through tact or by vital force in politics, the artist has endeavored to realize in his art."

Of these two parallels the second is perhaps less forced

than the first, but it proves nothing more, either for or against the author of *Tristan and Isolde.*

Animosity was more than ever redoubled against Richard Wagner when it was learned by chance that he had written against France, in the spring of 1871, a political comedy attack entitled *A Capitulation.* On this subject it would have been advisable not to cry too loudly, and thus call attention to our protracted ignorance. People interested in criticism and musical matters had known for a long time that of which the public was yet ignorant, and in order that the public should be enlightened, it was necessary that a tourist-writer should travel into the "pays des milliards," and there make this unexpected discovery.

This tardiness of information and this fashion of becoming possessed of facts five years after they happen, are scarcely to our credit. Either this hostile publication had a paramount importance, and we should have recognized it from the first, or else it was a matter of no particular consequence, in which case it had been wise to make less noise about it. To attach so much importance to a parody quite inoffensive in its extravagance was to make all the more conspicuous our lack of foresight and knowledge.

It is also held a crime on the part of Richard Wagner that he should have composed in 1871 a triumphal march for the coronation of the German emperor. Assuredly, it would have been better, if he, who had lived several years in France, had abstained from doing this. But is it not the privilege of all musicians to celebrate the military triumphs of their country, and do they not always expect an unquestionable success? Furthermore, would the French do well to blame a German composer for having celebrated a German conquest when they have been so loud in their praises of Félicien David and Gounod for singing the future victories of France, and have never blamed the Italian Spontini for celebrating in official

cantatas the oppressor of his country, and even dedicating to him upon his order a grand opera like *Fernando Cortez?*

Weber acted otherwise, and better than Spontini, he who made himself the Tyrtæus of the Germans during the campaign of 1813; who put to music the most violent war songs against our invading flag and against a conqueror justly abhorred. But Weber went in this sense farther than Wagner; he composed not only his cantata of victory *Combat and Triumph*, after the battle of Waterloo, — as Wagner did for the crowning of the Emperor, — he had already, in the very height of the war, launched against us those patriotic songs which kindled the ardor of the combatants.

And for all that, who would dream to-day of banishing Weber from France, of denying his genius, because he was our bitter and victorious enemy? Nobody dreamed of it when twelve years after this explosion of hatred, he passed through Paris on his way to London to direct his Oberon. French society received him with a flattering eagerness, and desired to remember but one thing, that it ought to honor genius, wherever found and whence it might come.

Richard Wagner, then, has done less against France than has Weber. But, it is said, he has not only composed a march of triumph; he has also done an injury to a vanquished people in order to avenge his offended self-love for the repulse which that people had formerly given to his *Tannhäuser*.

But another German composer has also wronged, also injured us, in return for our kind reception and our bravos. And this composer enjoys to-day the most unalloyed glory, both as a man and a musician, even in France, where everybody is ignorant of what he thought of us. The revelation which we are about to make will perhaps detract a little from the ideal image of the tender Mozart, but however greatly it may surprise his devoted admirers, it will not touch his genius

nor his work. It will prove however, that one can as well detest and injure France with the gentle nature of a Mozart, as with the rancorous spirit of a Wagner.

And to begin with, in what did Mozart, whom they have wished to make a model of all the virtues, differ from the rest of mankind? Had he truly that inflexible integrity, that honesty which would shun even the thought of evasion or of subterfuge; he who, after having sold his *Symphonie Concertante* and two overtures to Legros, director of the Concert Spirituel, remarked quite innocently, "He believes himself to be the sole possessor, but that is not so, for I have it still fresh in my head, and I will write it out from memory as soon as I get home." The act does more credit to his memory than to his delicacy.

Was he of a nature so amiable, and did he preserve an invariable recognition of the services rendered him; this young man who presumed to cast reflections and calumnies on Grimm, who had been his most devoted protector at the time of his first visit to Paris with his parents? The enthusiasm of Grimm was considerably chilled, it is true, when he saw Mozart return, a presumptuous boy of twenty-two, gifted with a prodigious vanity and entirely lacking the qualities of tact and amiability which are necessary in order to succeed in Paris; but he had still accorded him a constant friendship, if not a very efficacious protection.

And even had he not done so, nothing warranted Mozart in making this denunciation so full of anger and harshness; at least the recollection of past favors should have prevented him from speaking of Grimm in these rude terms: "The greatest benefit which he has accorded me, consists of fifteen louis d'or which he loaned me in small sums during the illness of my mother. Is he afraid of losing them? If he has any doubt on this subject he truly deserves to be kicked, for that would be showing suspicion with regard to my honesty (the only offense which can put me in a rage) and my talent."

Had he, finally, that profound respect for his family, or even a mind so delicate, he who would terminate thus a letter to a respectable parent :

"I wish you, *mon cher oncle*, good health, and 1,000 *compliments à ma cousine. Je suis, de tout mon cœur, Monsieur, votre invariable cochon,*

"W. A. MOZARTIN."[1]

They have jeered and still jeer at Wagner for his uncouth wit, and "ses plaisanteries d'éléphant." They are too often sufficiently heavy, but they are less rude than the above, and moreover do not address themselves to an aged man.

This short digression on the character and humor of Mozart does not concern us Frenchmen, it is true, and will simply weaken the ideal which people have been pleased to form of him,—of this young man so timid, chaste and respectful, who was nothing less than all that. But, here is what touches us more, and what will surprise our readers, for the biographers and translators of Mozart have carefully passed over it, to this day.

Several of his letters written from Paris, contain marks of contempt, and insults to our intelligence, as for instance his letter of July 9th, 1778. After having spoken of his ballet of the Petits Riens, of which, he says, he has only composed six pieces out of the twelve, the rest being, according to him, only an arrangement of "*miserable French airs*," he goes on to say: "The Capellmeister Bach will soon be here, and I think he is coming with a view to writing an opera. *These French people are, and always will be asses. They are incapable of producing anything, and they are forced to depend on foreigners.*" The compliment is worth its price, especially coming from a young man, whose pride was wounded at not finding the French people more worshipful of him.

[1] The words here in italics are in French in the original, Mozart readily resorting to the French language for little pleasantries of this kind.

Nearly a month later, Mozart wrote to his father under date of July 31st: "There is no middle course, I must either write a grand opera, or write none at all. If I compose only a small one, my profit will be insignificant, for in this country all is taxed, without reckoning that if the opera has not the good fortune to please these *boobies of Frenchmen*, that is the end of it; I should have no more orders, I should derive little from it, and my reputation would suffer. But if I compose a grand opera I will get better returns, I will be in my special element, and I will have greater chance of success because a great work offers more opportunities for gaining applause. I assure you I will not hesitate a moment if I obtain an order for a work. The devil has forged this language, it is true, and I understand too well the difficulties it has presented to all composers: but notwithstanding all, I feel myself in a position to conquer them, as well as they.

"On the contrary, when I fancy—and that happens often—that my opera will go well, then I feel myself on fire, my whole being vibrates, and I long to teach the French people to know the Germans, to esteem and to fear them. Why is it that the French can never make an opera? Why must they always look to foreigners? The greatest obstacle for me, would arise from the singers. But my resolution is taken; I will not seek a quarrel, only, if I am driven to a corner I must defend myself. I wish to avoid a duel, *for I have no taste for fighting with dwarfs*."

Mozart, who had this pecuniary question very much at heart, refers to it again in his letter of September 11, the same in which he disposes so well of his protector Grimm. "I have not wished to reject flatly the proposition of Noverre, because that might have caused them to think that I lacked confidence in myself. In truth my conditions were not acceptable, but I knew it in advance, for such is not the custom here. Here is how those things work; you probably

know it already. The opera finished, they rehearse it. If it does not suit the taste of these puppies of Frenchmen, they do not give it, and the composer has his trouble for his pains. On the other hand, if it is judged good they put it on the stage, and if it succeeds, the gain is in proportion to the success. You see how it is; one can never count on anything."

Asses, dwarfs, boobies, puppies; we are only puzzled to choose between the epithets with which Mozart has favored us; surely, he has treated us scarcely better than will be done later on by the author of *Lohengrin*.

And yet there is between them this difference, that Richard Wagner will abuse us as a foreigner, after having returned to his own country; after one of his principle works, good or bad, shall have been hissed by us, without understanding a note of it, whereas Mozart slung these amenities at us in his letters written from Paris even, when society was receiving him with a marked kindness, notwithstanding his unpleasant humor and his pride; when his ballet of the "Petits Riens" was obtaining success at the Opera, and two symphonies had made his name famous at the Concert Spirituel. An essential difference, and which is not, it seems to us, to the advantage of Mozart.

But all this is nothing, and in the hatred which he has vowed to Paris, Mozart goes on to treat French society, its customs and morals, in a fashion which quite defies excuse or extenuation. These passages, it must be repeated, have been patriotically omitted by the French critics or historians of Mozart, who did not wish to awaken the public from its blind confidence in the singer of Donna Anna, nor to disfigure the beautiful ideal which it had formed of the heart and mind of the sweet Wolfgang.

Mozart, who could be kind-hearted, but who was of an incredible lightness, commenced in this brisk fashion, his letter

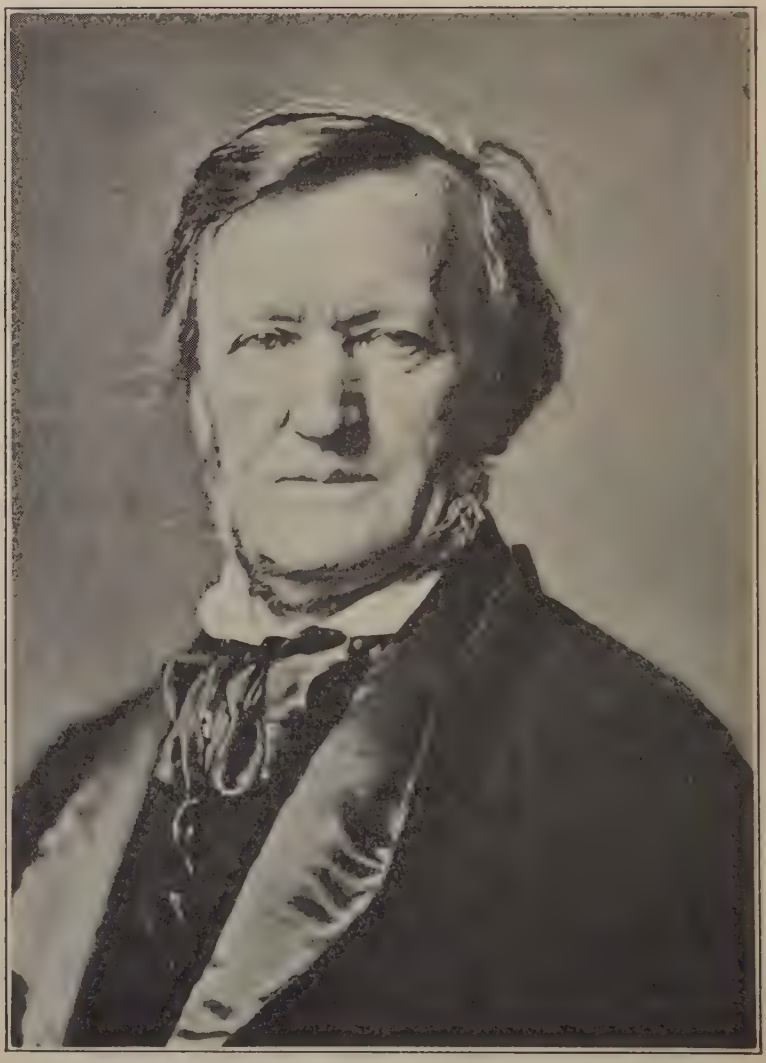
of the 18th of July, the second that he wrote after his mother's death, which occurred only a fortnight before. "I hope that you have received my two preceding letters. We will not speak further of that which formed the subject of them, it is done, we can change nothing." And after this stoical passage, he adds, in speaking of a visit paid by him to the celebrated singer Raff, who was then at Paris; "When I had finished playing, — and Raff during the whole time had never ceased to applaud me very vigorously and very sincerely — I exchanged some words with Ritter. I remarked among other things, how little I enjoyed my sojourn in Paris, even setting music aside, for, as I said to him, I do not find a single relief, a single support, a single agreeable or honest relation with the world, particularly with the women, who for the most part are ——, and the rare exceptions are not well-bred. Ritter could not do otherwise than agree with me." From the women, let us pass to the young men. Two days after, Mozart, learning that a captain by the name of Hopfgarten had been killed in a skirmish between the Prussian troops and those of Archduke Maximilian, wrote to his father: "Could it by chance be the brave baron Hopfgarten, whom we met at Paris, with M. de Bosé? That would be sad, but it were far better that he should meet a glorious death, than to die in his bed of a disgraceful malady, like most of the young men of Paris. Impossible to talk with a man here who has not been three or four times, or who is not still favored with some gallantry of this sort. From the cradle children are infected with it; but I am telling you nothing new, and you have known all this much longer than I have. Believe me, however, if I add that contagion has done much to increase it."

Although he has been hissed by us as strongly as Mozart has been applauded, Wagner has never permitted himself, on the whole, to make accusations so objectionable against the so-called infamy of French society. He has been reproached,

not without reason, for crying down afterwards the Parisian amateurs, from whom he had demanded glory, and who had received him with jeers, but Mozart himself, the pure Mozart, what was he doing in the midst of a people whom he judged so corrupt, both in soul and body?

As a composer, Richard Wagner has shown himself less hostile to France than did Weber; as a man he has wronged us less than did Mozart, and yet, we heap upon him all the abuses which are spared his two compatriots. Besides the fact that these revengeful excommunications have no force when they do not strike at all the guilty ones, they are sure to be only temporary, and to be quite effaced in the course of a few years, if not months. Were it not that the self-love of the French, wounded that their judgment has not been made a law in other countries, continues to oppose the failure of *Tannhäuser* at Paris to the brilliant triumphs of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* on so many of the other stages in the world, it would not be long ere Wagner would be received back into our favor, free to reward us afterwards with compliments after the manner of Mozart.

But what matters it, after all? Posterity cares neither for the writings nor the thoughts of a man, nor even for the man himself, when it is a question of judging his works, and therein it gives proof of wisdom and impartiality. It will forget, then, the injuries of Wagner, as quickly as it has forgotten those of his predecessors. And if the author of *Lohengrin* and of *Tristan* possess true musical genius, his wrongs will, in the end, hurt us no more than the graver wrongs of Weber and Mozart have done.



RICHARD WAGNER.

From an engraving by Krausse, after a photograph.
(Not in French edition.)

RICHARD WAGNER

CHAPTER I

THE YOUTH AND FIRST ATTEMPTS OF RICHARD WAGNER. — THE FAIRIES AND THE NOVICE OF PALERMO. — SOJOURNS AT MAGDEBURG, KŐNIGSBERG, AND RIGA

ICHARD WAGNER was born at Leipsic, on the 22d of May, 1813, in an old house called "The House of the Red and White Lion," No. 88 Hause Bruhl.[1]

He was the ninth and last child of a family in humble circumstances. His grandfather was a simple custom-house officer at Leipsic, and his father held the modest position of clerk of police. The latter had a good knowledge of languages, particularly the French, which was the cause of his being chosen by Marshal Davoust to organize the police of the city during the occupation by the French army. He had a very keen taste for poetry and the theatre. He even took pleasure in playing at comedy, and on one occasion he and some of his friends produced, at a certain salon of Leipsic, *Die Mitschuldigen* of Goethe.

After the desperate battles of the 18th and 19th of Octo-

[1] This was the great commercial street of Leipsic, in the centre of the city. On May 22, 1873, the sixtieth anniversary of the birth of the master, a commemorative tablet was placed on the old house, which to-day threatens demolition, and which must soon disappear, notwithstanding the worthy project formed by some admirers, to purchase and repair the building. The architects of the city have pronounced such restoration useless and impracticable.

ber, 1813, which took place under the walls of the city, and which delivered Germany from the hated yoke of Napoleon, there broke out in Leipsic a deadly fever, caused by the enormous number of dead, sick and wounded, accumulated in and around the city; and this epidemic carried away the clerk, Frederic Wagner, on Nov. 22, six months after the day when Richard was born. The latter had, therefore, an innate liking for the theatre. Nor was he the only one of the family to inherit the tastes of his father, for his sister Rosalie acquired a real fame as tragedienne; while his elder brother Albert, actor and singer at Wurzburg, at Dresden, and afterwards manager of a theatre at Berlin, had two daughters who became singers, and one of whom shed a lustre over the name of Johanna Wagner, worthy of comparison with Schroeder-Devrient.

The mother of Richard Wagner retired to Eiselben, where she lived for two years in a state bordering on indigence, depending for support on a small government pension. About this time she married a friend of her former husband, the comedian Ludwig Geyer, and came with all her family to reside at Dresden, where Geyer held a good rank in the royal troupe. After having had a prolonged success at Leipsic, this Geyer, who was not only a comedian of merit, but had also tried his hand at the dramatist's profession, and cultivated painting with some degree of talent, gave token at once of a decided affection for the child Richard. Unhappily he died when the boy was only seven years old.

Nevertheless, Wagner always remembered his second father. He spoke of him with an affectionate respect; he guarded lovingly his portrait by the side of that of his mother, and was much touched when at Bayreuth, on the celebration of his sixtieth anniversary, they organized in the family the representation of one of the little pieces by Geyer, "The Massacre of the Infants of Bethlehem."

The very evening before his death, Geyer had asked little Richard to play him two airs from *Der Freischütz*, which had been taught him on the piano. As the child did not acquit himself badly, he murmured in a feeble voice to his wife, "Do you think he might have a taste for music?" And the next morning, when he was dead, his wife, in recalling to the children how many proofs he had given them of a warm paternal affection, said to Richard, "He would like to have made something of you." The child always remembered these words and tried from his heart to realize them.

Nobody at that time would have dreamed of making a musician of Richard Wagner, — his second father would have wished to make a painter of him, had he not decidedly rebelled at the plan; and when he was nine years old, his mother, assisted by a brother of her second husband, placed him at the school of the Cross, in order that he might make a serious study of the classics. He was then a headstrong and fantastic child, at once impetuous and self-willed, and would fly into a passion at nothing.

"I have grown up," said he, "outside of all authority, and with no guides except life, art, and myself." And he was one of those to whom such independence is quite necessary. He gave himself up especially to the study of Greek, and became the favorite pupil of Prof. Sillig. He also had a great liking for mythology and ancient history, but he had little taste for the piano, instruction on which he received from his professor of Latin.

The technique of the instrument bored him, and he amused himself by playing from memory instead of studying, so that one day the Professor gave up, and said that nothing could ever be made of the boy. And, in fact, Wagner could never learn to play the piano properly.

His professor gone, he continued to repeat from memory, with extravagant fingering, two overtures, which then con-

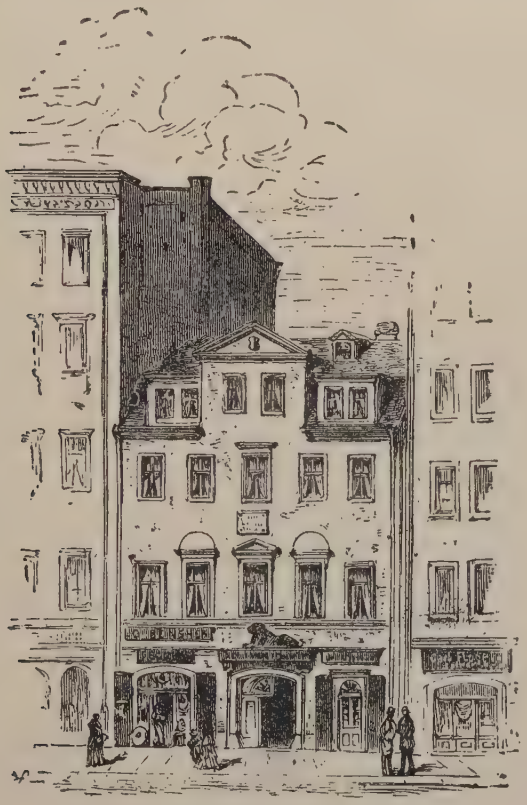
stituted his entire musical repertoire, — that of the *Magic Flute*, and, above all, that of *Der Freischütz* which he had just heard at the theatre, and which made on his mind its first deep musical impression. Moreover, he would play these two pieces for himself only; and as he was incapable of correctly executing a scale, he conceived thenceforth an instinctive aversion for all that was mere virtuosity. But the childish admiration which he had for Weber was so great that he would run to the window as soon as the hour approached when the composer was wont to pass the house on his way to the theatre. Eagerly he watched him, with a sort of religious terror, and jealously preserved his image in the depths of his heart.

Weber, who exercised from the first such an influence on a child of nine years, was then leader of the orchestra at the Dresden theatre, where, since 1817, he had been fighting for German music, and against the Italian school; having the whole court against him, and only succeeding in having *Der Freischütz* performed in the theatre which he directed, a year after its brilliant success at Berlin.

Weber, so it appears, was fond of coming in and chatting with the charming and intelligent Madame Geyer, whose sweet manners and playful disposition had a special charm for artists; but he was never in any way the instructor of Wagner. Indeed he died at London when Richard was only thirteen years old and was giving no attention to music; but he had awakened his musical instinct, as Wagner was pleased to recognize. In his *Letter on Music*, in 1860, Wagner writes: —

"Notwithstanding a serious scientific education, I have lived from my earliest youth in close relations with the theatre. This part of my life fell in the last years of Carl Maria von Weber. He personally directed at that time the execution of the operas in Dresden, the city where I lived. I received

from this master my first musical impressions. His melodies filled me with enthusiasm. His character and his nature exercised a veritable fascination over me; and his death in a foreign country filled my childish heart with desolation."



BIRTHPLACE OF RICHARD WAGNER.

The small savings amassed by Geyer had been quickly absorbed, and his widow found herself again in straightened circumstances. At that time, three of her children had turned towards the theatre, and her daughter Rosalie, in particular, had concluded a fine engagement as "leading lady" at the Stadt Theatre of Leipsic. In 1827, Madame

Geyer decided to go and live near her. She removed to Leipsic with her young children, and Richard was made to enter Nicolai College. But he was admitted to the *tertia* only, notwithstanding he had already commenced his *seconda* at Dresden, where he passed for a good student *in litteris*, having translated with taste, after class-hours, the first twelve books of the Odyssey, and having had the honor to carry off the prize in a poetical contest, the theme being the death of one of his comrades. His piece had even been printed, after a good deal of the pathos had been cut out. He had then taken it into his little head to be a poet, and so put himself to the study of Shakespeare, in order that he might be able to read in the original text. As he had an exceptional facility for German verse, he had undertaken a metrical translation of the monologue of Romeo. Then he had constructed tragedies in imitation of the antique, after the manner of those of Apel, and another, inspired by Hamlet and King Lear, where more than forty individuals died, one after another, so that he was obliged to resuscitate some of them in order to furnish a denouement.

The humiliation which he experienced at finding himself classed in the *tertia* in Leipsic had the effect of disgusting him with the classic studies, and turning his attention towards music.

That very year Beethoven died, and the hearing of his symphonies at the concerts of the Gewandhaus, under the direction of the celebrated Matthaei, made on him a most profound impression.

"One evening," says the hero of his story ("A Pilgrimage to Beethoven"), "having listened to one of Beethoven's symphonies, I had an attack of fever; I fell ill, and on recovering, I became a musician." Thus goes the story, but history bears some analogy to this account. In his *Letter on Music* he writes more seriously:

"The death of Beethoven closely followed that of Weber. That was the first time I had heard him spoken of, and it was then that I became acquainted with his music, attracted, if I may say so, by the news of his death. These serious impressions developed in me an inclination more and more ardent for music. It was only later, however, when my studies had made me familiar with the classic age, and had inspired some poetical efforts, that I came to study music more earnestly."

His project in cultivating music was to set his famous tragedy of the forty-two victims to a score similar to that of *Egmont*, which he had just heard. He imagined that a week's study of harmony would enable him to compose such a work, and he buried himself in Logier's *Treatise on Harmony*, which he had bought of an itinerant bookseller. But it was in vain, he did not succeed in mastering it.

Then he resolved to announce his new vocation to his family as soon as he should have actually composed something, — a sonata, an air, a quartette. At first they combatted the idea, as a mere passing fancy on the part of one who could not even play the piano; but they finally gave him a master, Gottlieb Müller, afterwards organist at Altenburg. The poor master had a hard time with his pupil, who was infatuated with Hoffman, and whose brain became so turned with so many whimsical inventions, that he dreamed in broad daylight, and saw fundamental notes appear to him, and thirds and fifths with which he held mysterious conversation.[1] At last the master of harmony, not wishing to lose his own head, gave up his pupil in despair, declaring, like the professor of the piano, "Nothing can ever be made of that boy."

This prediction, twice repeated, in no wise troubled the

[1] These stories, however, were not lost, for *The Brothers of Serapion* contains an account of the poetical tourney at Wartburg, and some germs of *The Meistersinger* are found in another story by Hoffman, *Master Martin, the Cooper of Nuremburg*.

dreamer, who bravely wrote an overture, and carried it to Dorn, leader of the orchestra at the Royal Theatre, with whom his sister Rosalie had put him in communication. Dorn accepted the overture, and rehearsed it, in spite of the laughter of the Matthaei orchestra. Furthermore, he kept it on the program, and had it performed between the acts of a piece. The public, quite unaccustomed to that style of composition, could distinguish nothing but the roll of kettle-drums, which persistently returned every four measures, to the very end, — so that the piece was known after a single hearing under the name of "The Overture of the Kettle-drums."

"This overture," wrote Wagner, "was the culminating point of my absurdities. For facilitating the study of it, I had conceived the idea of writing the score in three colors of ink: red for the stringed instruments, black for the reed, and green for the brass. The composition was so complicated, that the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven seemed beside it as one of Pleyel's sonatas."

The reaction of the Revolution, which overturned in France the throne of Charles X., made itself felt over all Europe, and particularly in Saxony, where the king saw himself forced to grant to his subjects a constitution.

"With one bound, I became a revolutionist," wrote Wagner, "and arrived at the conclusion that every man with any aspiration should occupy himself exclusively with politics. I was never so happy as when in the company of political writers. I also undertook an overture on a political theme. It was under these circumstances that I quitted college to enter the university, not however, to devote myself to the study of any one of the Faculties (for I still intended to follow music), but to take up a course of esthetics and philosophy. I profited as little as possible by this occasion to instruct me; on the other hand I abandoned myself to all

the follies of the student's life, and that, to speak the truth, with so much recklessness, and so little restraint, that I very soon became disgusted."[1] And this revolutionist and man of the world was only seventeen years old.

When Wagner had sown his wild oats, he realized that it was time to devote himself to the regular study and pursuit of music. He had previously left the Nicolai school, for the Thomas School, where his philological studies had not progressed much more smoothly. In 1830, he entered the University of Leipsic, as a student in philosophy and esthetics. He had the good fortune to meet there an excellent professor in the person of Theodore Weinlig, *precentor* at the Thomas Church. This admirable musician seemed to gain immediately the confidence of the youth, and put him on the right path. And Wagner always recognized the fact, for even to the end of his life he was accustomed to say to his friends, "Weinlig had no special method, but he was clear-headed and practical. Indeed you cannot *teach* composition: you may show how music gradually came to be what it is, and thus guide a young man's judgment; but this is historical criticism and cannot directly result in practice. All you can do is to point to some working example, some particular piece, set a task in that direction, and correct the pupil's work. This is what Weinlig did with me. But the true lesson consisted in his patient and careful inspection of what had been written. With infinite kindness he put his finger on some defective bit and explained the why and wherefore of the alterations he thought desirable. I readily saw what he was aiming at, and soon managed to please him. He dismissed me, saying, 'You have learnt to stand on your own legs.'"[2]

[1] Autobiography, translated by M. Camille Benoit, in his Souvenirs of R. Wagner. One vol. 18mo. Charpentier, 1884.

[2] Personal conversation with M. Dannreuther, given by him in Grove's Musical Dictionary, article *Wagner*.

It was Weinlig, and not Weber, as has been too often repeated, who said one day to Wagner, "It is probable you will never have to write a fugue, but you must know how to write one. By that means, you will acquire independence, and all the rest will be easy." He worked with so much ardor under Weinlig's direction, that the latter dismissed him in about six months. Thanks to him, Wagner had learned to profoundly admire Mozart; but Beethoven with his symphonies, particularly the Ninth, was always his idol. After this period of study, he composed a number of pieces; first a polonaise and a sonata for the piano, which had the honor of being published by the well-known house of Breitkopf & Härtel; then a concert overture with a fugue, and above all a symphony in four parts, which he himself declared to be inspired by Beethoven, and certain pieces by Mozart.

Dorn, in writing later to the *New Musical Gazette* of Schumann, has noted in an amusing passage this enthusiasm of Wagner for Beethoven. "I doubt," said he, "if ever a young musician has lived in closer intimacy with Beethoven than did Wagner at the age of seventeen. He had copied by hand the overtures and the grand instrumental compositions of the master. He slept with the quartettes under his pillow, he sung the *lieder*, and whistled the concertos, for his talent as a pianist had never been brilliant. In short, he was possessed of a 'Teutonic fury,' which, joined to a good education and a rare activity of mind, promised to bear rich harvests."[1]

During the summer of 1832, Wagner accomplished a double artistic pilgrimage. He went first to visit the

[1] During the year 1830, he made for the piano a transcription of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which he offered, by letter of Oct. 6th, to the house of Schott; and in 1831, feeling sure that he could do work of that kind, he wrote a very modest letter to a musical bureau (Peters), in which he offered his services in the capacity of corrector and arranger of proof. That is the trade which he afterwards followed in Paris.

musical city·*par excellence*, the one where Mozart and Beethoven had lived, but he was terribly disappointed to hear at Vienna only refrains from *Zampa*, and potpourris on *Zampa*.

He took himself quickly away and went to Prague, where Mozart had found success and happiness. He had fondly hoped to find at Vienna an opportunity to hear his symphony rehearsed, and had furnished himself with scores of his symphony and his overture. He was more happy at Prague, where he became acquainted with Dionys Weber, who directed the Conservatory, and who procured for him the pleasure of hearing his symphony on the orchestra. This little success had induced Wagner to try some theatrical music. At Prague, he had even written a frightfully dramatic poem, entitled *The Nuptials*. And soon after his return to Leipsic, he had written the first part, a septette, which his master Weinlig approved. But his sister Rosalie having found the libretto detestible, he destroyed the whole thing, and awaited another occasion to attempt an opera. In the meantime he had given his overture and his symphony to the directors of the concerts of the Gewandhaus, and the president of the Committee, the Aulic Counsellor, Frederic Rochlitz, had written for an interview with him. "But you are a very young man," he cried, on seeing him enter. "I expected to see a man of some years, judging from the experience of the composer." He then proposed to have his symphony tried by a new society, the Euterpe, on Christmas Day, 1832, and this trial scarcely satisfied the author. But he chanced to be praised in the *Journal du Monde Elégant*, by Heinrich Laube, a writer of some standing, and a fortnight later, on the 8th of Jan., 1833, his symphony had the honor to be performed at the Gewandhaus under the direction of Auguste Pohlentz. His overture also was played there at a concert on the 30th of April. These two productions were

received fairly well, and gave Wagner a standing at Leipsic, all thanks to the support of Heinrich Laube, an excellent, but hare-brained fellow, who exercised much influence over this musician of twenty years.

This symphony was really his first work, and Laube's article was the first that had been written about him.[1]

Wagner had gayly recounted these reminiscences, when, fifty years later, being at Venice with his family, the idea occurred to him to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his debut as composer by having performed for the benefit of his wife and father-in-law "this youthful production, — superannuated," he added laughing. The execution, entrusted to the professors and students of the San Marcello Lyceum, took place on the Christmas of 1882, to celebrate thus the birthday of Madame Wagner, and provoked on the part of the author some retrospective remarks on himself.

He recognized the fact that this symphony proceeded indirectly from Beethoven; that the andante, in particular, would never have seen the light without the andante of the symphony in C major and the allegretto of the symphony in A. Then he continues thus: "If the work bore the mark of Richard Wagner, it would be found at most in that unbounded confidence, which at that period prevented him from doubting anything.

"This confidence in myself I drew not alone from my skill as a contrapuntist, a quality which, in course of time, was called in question more than any other by a court musician at Munich (Strauss), but from the great advantage which I had

[1] History of a symphony in the Souvenirs of Richard Wagner. In 1834–35, in a visit to Leipsic, he had prayed Mendelssohn — then leader of the orchestra at the concerts of the Gewandhaus — if not to read, at least to preserve this symphony, and Mendelssohn never spoke of it to him again.

This work would have been lost, had not the separate pieces been found one fine day in an old valise, which had been forgotten by Wagner, when he left Dresden, in 1849.

over Beethoven. While pausing at the point of view of the second symphony, I was already quite familiar with the Heroic, with those in C minor and A major, all works of which the master had no idea, or at least a very vague idea, when he wrote his second symphony." Thus he modestly explains the flattering exclamation of Rochlitz. Meanwhile he constantly visited the theatre, and looked about him for a poem to put to music; refusing one on Kosciuszko, the hero of the Polish Revolution, which was offered to him by his friend, Heinrich Laube. His brother Albert, who had a good tenor voice, was then actor, singer, and manager of the theatre at Würzburg. Richard went to spend a year with him, and willingly accepted the place of leader of the chorus, at ten florins a month. The experience of his brother in theatrical matters was of great service to him. The Musical Society performed several of his pieces, and as his post was not confining, he found time to compose his first grand opera. This opera of *The Fairies* was taken from a fable by Gozzi, entitled *The Serpent Woman.* It is a story of a fairy who is in love with a mortal, and wishes for his sake to renounce immortality; but it is necessary that her lover should have confidence in her, however cruel she may show herself to him. He is unequal to the test, and the fairy is changed into a toad in the story of Gozzi, into a statue in the opera of Wagner. In order to recover her, and to regain his happiness, the lover brings himself, in the fable, to kiss the unclean animal. In the opera, he recalls her to life by the ardor and beauty of his songs.

Thus, even at this period, Wagner's mind was haunted with the eternal myth of Psyche, which later on was to furnish him the subject of *Lohengrin.* In both these dramas, indeed, absolute confidence, resting not upon facts, but upon inward persuasion, is presented as a necessary condition of love. As for the music, it reflected, according to his own declaration, the triple influence of Beethoven, of Weber and of Marschner.

They had tried several fragments of it in the family, at Würzburg, in 1834, and it seemed to the author that there were many good points about it, and that the finale of the second act was especially destined to produce a fine effect; but he was not able to put it to the test. On his return to Dresden, he had proposed the work to the Director Ringelhardt, who had accepted it. The *Journal* of his friend Laube had announced that immediately after *Le Bal Masqué*, by Auber, would be played the first opera of a young composer called Richard Wagner; but when *Le Bal Masqué* had finished its run, the director, with no thought for *The Fairies*, mounted Bellini's *I Capuletti e Montecchi*.

If Wagner was never able to bring out this opera at Leipsic or anywhere else, it was because the public at that time had ears for foreign music only,—for French and Italian operas, to the great detriment of German productions. Wagner himself was much taken with *La Muette de Portici*, and was delighted with *I Capuletti e Montecchi*, less on account of the music, it is true, than because of the pathetic and superb playing of Madame Schroeder-Devrient, who came to sing at Dresden in the spring of 1834. He saw then for the first time that incomparable artist, who came to exercise so great an influence over him, and to suggest to him that intimate union of the music with the drama, to which he afterwards directed all his efforts. He always said that the example of Devrient had been his constant ideal, and each time that he conceived a role he had her before his eyes. The impression which she produced on the young admirer of Beethoven, notwithstanding the poverty of Bellini's music, was most profound. But when, in course of time, they represented *La Muette* at Leipsic, Wagner was quite surprised to see that the striking scenery and rapid action of this opera produced a great effect and held the public breathless without the aid of an exceptional artist like Schroeder-Devrient. That made

him reflect: certainly the heroic music of Beethoven was the ideal ever present before his eyes; but was it possible for him to write something similar for the theatre? On the contrary, could he not draw inspiration from Auber and Bellini at one and the same time, and by combining their different merits, would he not arrive more quickly at the immediate and tangible success which he sought? What would be necessary to accomplish this? First to imagine an animated scene of action, then to write music easy to sing and of a nature to catch the public ear. He set himself quickly to work. He was twenty years old, had the happiest possible disposition, and was overflowing with exuberant vitality.

So breaking off from the abstract mysticism of his early youth, it was of material beauty and of woman that he undertook to sing in his second opera, *The Love-Veto*, which he conceived during a holiday sojourn at Töplitz, in Bohemia. He had borrowed the subject of this piece from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, but he had totally changed the character of it, aiming only to scoff at hypocritical Puritanism, and to glorify sensual love. This piece, of a sufficiently lively and daring intrigue, in which are given full play all the juvenile passions that fermented in this youth of twenty, has the peculiarity that it forms an absolute antithesis to the preceding subject treated by Wagner; and these two operas, *The Fairies* and *The Love-Veto*, fixed the two poles between which his genius was to be evolved. As he himself has noted, the tendencies of these two dramas, so opposed to each other, will be merged in *Tannhäuser*. He means by that, the idea of sacrifice and of renouncement which triumphs in the *Flying Dutchman*, in *Lohengrin*, in *Parsifal* and the indomitable appetite for physical enjoyment which prevails in the *Walkyrie* and in *Tristan*.

During the autumn of 1834, Richard Wagner, in order to provide the necessities of life, accepted the place of director of

music at the Magdeburg theatre. He commenced now to live by his art, and his new vocation pleased him very much for a while; the world behind the scenes and the jovial company of the actors, and especially the actresses, were not displeasing to one of his age and temperament. For the rest he performed his duties as well as could be desired, and during the year or more which he spent at Magdeburg, he became an excellent leader, and did his best to promote the prosperity of the theatre. For example, the director having decided to mount Auber's *Lestocq*, which opera Wagner always thought charming, the latter gave himself much trouble to render the work a success. He reinforced by several chorus singers taken from the army, the Russian battalion which comes to sustain the revolt; and thanks to this unusual number of singers he obtained an immense effect of sound, which for a few evenings, at least, attracted crowds to the theatre,—and then that was all.

Wagner continued to compose in the midst of his duties and distractions of all sorts. He had performed, under his direction, his overture to *The Fairies*, and one other which he had written in 1835 on a drama by Apel, *Christopher Columbus*. He composed at random a piece to celebrate New Year's Day of 1835, by simply using the theme of the andante from his unique symphony, and tacking on some songs from a fantastic farce entitled *The Spirit of the Mountain*, and the favor with which such productions were received confirmed him in the idea that there was no need of being conscientious and painstaking in order to insure success. How many of our composers in the best circumstances think the same thing to-day, and will never change their aim.

He thus finished setting to music the *Love-Veto*, having always in mind Auber as his model, and Schroeder-Devrient for the principal role. He had at first hoped to have this opera accepted by the leader at Leipsic, in recompense for his

treatment of *The Fairies*, but the application had been in vain, and he was thrown back upon Magdeburg. The theatre of this city was then directed by a man named Bethmann, who was always on the verge of bankruptcy, notwithstanding a small subsidy furnished by the court of Saxony, and who had the habit of disappearing on pay-days. The troupe was in the most precarious situation in the spring of 1836, and already the actors were taking leave, to try their fortunes elsewhere. Some of them, however, consented to remain, out of regard for Wagner, and the latter made superhuman efforts to forestall the failure. He was justly entitled to a benefit performance, to reimburse him for the expenses of a trip which he had made the preceding year to gather in recruits for the chorus; but the director having borne the expense of staging the piece, it was agreed that he should take the receipts from the first performance, and that Wagner should have those from the second. There were only twelve days before the close of the season. It was nothing but rehearsals at the theatre, and rehearsals at the artists' houses. The whole city was in a flutter, and meanwhile nobody knew his part and everything went at cross purposes. At the general rehearsal things progressed pretty well, thanks to Wagner, who conducted, gesticulated, sung and shouted for the whole company. But at the performance (March 29, 1836), which had attracted an immense crowd and brought large returns to the director, absolute confusion reigned, and it was quite impossible to make anything out of it. This was so much the worse for the musician, who believed he had written a good work, and so much the better for the poet, whose piece would probably have been seized by the commissary of police, had he been able to comprehend the details. As it was, only the title had appeared to this functionary too free, considering that the piece was to be played during holy week, and he had authorized the performance only on condition that the title should be changed to

The Novice of Palermo, and on the repeated assurance from Wagner that the subject had been borrowed from a very serious drama of Shakespeare. Oh, the trickery of authors! Oh, the simplicity of censors!

The second performance of *The Novice of Palermo* was to close the season, and Wagner, whose turn it was to pocket the receipts, had put the prices up very high. What was his surprise and consternation to find, a few minutes before the rising of the curtain, that there were only three people in the room, — his proprietors, husband and wife, and a Polish Jew in gala costume. At the same time, to make matters worse, the husband of the prima donna was belaboring the first tenor, and then his own wife, behind the scenes; this resulted in the whole troupe taking sides, and engaging in a rough and tumble fight, which rendered them all quite unable to appear before the public. The curtain rose, and the manager solemnly announced to the three spectators that, owing to unforeseen difficulties, the performance could not take place.

In the humorous account which Wagner has given of this failure, and of the previous experiences of *The Novice of Palermo*, he shows that these misfortunes did not in the least shake his confidence in making a start. Besides, he was not criticised over harshly. The Magdeburg *Journal*, while deploring the haste brought to bear on the rehearsals, and the final result, — a hurried execution, where the actors did not even know their parts — judged that if the composer were to have his opera performed in a more important city, and under more favorable circumstances, he would stand good chance of success. "There are many good qualities in it," said the writer. "What pleases me is that it vibrates; it is true music, and true melody, such as one would wish to find oftener in the work of our composers." In reality, Wagner had come so much under the influence of French and Italian musicians, especially Auber and Bellini, that very little of the German influence

was left, and it was that, no doubt, which caused him to be so well received in his own country.

About this time, Richard Wagner, relying on the approbation given to his opera, resolved to make another attempt to get *The Novice of Palermo* played at Leipsic. He remembered with satisfaction that the director of the theatre at this city (the same Ringelhardt) had a young daughter; and in order the better to persuade him, he asked the director to reflect what an immense advantage it would be for his daughter to make her debut in the pretty role of a young girl in this new opera. Unhappily the director was not so easily duped as the commissary at Magdeburg, and after going through the piece, he severely replied to the author: "I do not know whether or not the magistrate of Leipsic would authorize the performance of a work like that, and I doubt it very much, through respect for his authority; but in any case, understand, sir, that a person like my daughter would not figure in it." Wagner beat a retreat before this touchy parent, and presented his work next at Berlin, not at the Royal Opera, but at the more modest Residenz-Theatre, where he was pleasantly received, without obtaining anything. It was on this short visit to Berlin that he saw Spontini for the first time, directing a performance of *Fernando Cortez*. He was much struck by the effect which the old master obtained by bringing out the rhythm very strong, and making the evolutions on the stage to correspond with a mathematical precision. But more than all, the score of *Fernando Cortez* produced on him a deep impression, which was still very vivid when, two years later, he undertook the composition of *Rienzi*.

Now *The Novice of Palermo* was tossed about from right to left, and Wagner, who had left nothing but debts behind him at Magdeburg, solicited a place with his old friend Dorn, now precentor and director of religious music in the little Rus-

sian town of Riga.[1] But Wagner was not the only one to be provided for. He requested employment for his fiancée also, the pretty comedienne, Wilhelmina Planer, with whom he had fallen in love at Magdeburg. They had been betrothed for a long time, but he had not married her, for want of money. In the meantime, as she was engaged in the capacity of leading lady at Königsberg, he followed her to that little town, with the intention of becoming leader of the orchestra, and there he organized some concerts at the theatre. At last he obtained the desired position, and on November 24, 1836, he married Minna Planer. "I was in love," he wrote later, in a letter to his friends. "I married through obstinacy, and rendered unhappy myself and another, tormented by the weariness of a domestic life for which I had not the bare necessities. It was thus that I fell into poverty, the effects of which kill so many thousands." He stayed only a year at Königsberg, a prey to a thousand anxieties, unhappy, a torment to himself and to others, writing meanwhile but two overtures, one on *Rule Britannia*, and another entitled *Polonia*. Then he went to Riga, where Dorn had been able to obtain a place for his wife at the theatre, another for his sister-in-law, Theresa Planer, and for Wagner himself the position of first director of music. At first he was delighted with a post so much more profitable than those which he had hitherto occupied. He gave ten concerts, in which he had performed, not without success, his overture on *Christopher Columbus*, and that on *Rule Britannia*. He also wrote several airs, and chose *Norma* to be performed at his benefit, on Dec. 11, 1837.[2]

[1] He will utilize later a religious melody from *The Novice of Palermo* to express in Tannhäuser the respect and awe of the Pilgrims, admitted to the presence of the holy father. It is the melody which the wind and stringed instruments repeat alternately in the introduction to the third act.

[2] His admiration for Bellini reached its highest point in giving vent to his

Then all at once he took a dislike to his duties, at the same time that he felt awaken within him the first scruples of his artist's conscience. In writing his previous works, as he said himself, he had not shown himself scrupulous in the choice of means employed to bear away success. But one day, while engaged in composing the score of an opera comique in two acts, *The Happy Family of Bears*, after a tale from *The Arabian Nights*, he paused in disgust, re-read his pieces, and perceived that he was again fairly on his way to the composition of music à la Adam. He laid aside his work, feeling deeply hurt at the discovery. From that day, he despised the position of leader of an orchestra in a provincial town, facing a public unqualified to judge any new work, because it never heard anything except works with a reputation already made; and therefore, in order to guard against a weakness which might drive him to use means of execution close at hand, he decided to undertake a work of proportions too vast to admit of its being mounted in a small theatre. And since it was from Paris that all the operas came, which were then applauded in Germany, he turned his eyes towards Paris, and longed to go there and start afresh.

From the time that he was at Königsberg, and, poor and miserable, saw dance before his eyes the three hundred thousand francs which Meyerbeer was said to have gained from *The Huguenots*, he had been possessed with a mad desire

feelings in an article published in the *Spectator* of Riga, Dec., 1837. "The song, the song, and still the song, O Germans. The song is the language by which mankind should communicate one with another, and one will not understand you if this language is not made and kept as arbitrary as any other cultivated language should be. That which is bad in Bellini, each one of your village schoolmasters will do it better. If Bellini had served his apprenticeship with a German village schoolmaster, he would probably have learned it better, but he would have unlearned the art of song." Read the entire article translated in the *Wagnerian Review* of Paris (Feb., 1886). One may recall in this connection the keen *boutade* of Rossini, who said to Bellini himself, "It is very fortunate, *Vincenzo caro*, that you do not know music, for if you knew it, you would make it very badly."

to try his fortunes at Paris. He had just fancied that he had found a good subject for an opera in a novel by Heinrich König, *La Grande Fiancée*. He had immediately outlined the plot, and sent it to Scribe, hoping that the latter would not be too much occupied to write the poem, and obtain an acceptance at the opera. Naturally, he never heard a word on the subject from Scribe; so, when, in reading Bulwer's *Rienzi*, he believed that he had discovered therein a subject preferable to the preceding one, he took good care not to repeat his blunder. He undertook to make the whole thing himself, poem, score and all.[1]

It was during the summer of 1838 that he commenced to write the poem of *Rienzi;* and he put into it so much the more ardor, from the wild desire which he had to be freed as by a lightning stroke, from the evils of a precarious existence. On returning to Riga, he took lodgings in a lonely place outside the ramparts, in order to break away more completely from the paltriness of the theatrical life, and devote himself more thoroughly to the composition of his opera. By a happy coincidence, he was at that time teaching his opera troupe Mehul's *Joseph*, which, he says, elevated his thoughts, and aided him in correcting some past blunders. It was not that in undertaking *Rienzi* he had dreamed in the least of departing from the usual forms of the opera, but in writing the poem he had endeavored to make it less commonplace than the ordinary libretto; and as for the music, he wished to compose a great work, strong, noble, — in a word, the exact

[1] Later on, when he was chapel-master at Dresden, with Reissiger, as the latter attributed the non-success of his music to the fact that his librettos had been poor, Wagner offered to rhyme for him his old plot of *La Grande Fiancée*. But Reissiger feeling some hesitation about setting to music a poem which Richard Wagner had renounced, it was finally inherited by Kittl, director of the Prague Conservatory; and his opera was represented at Prague on the 19th of Feb., 1848, under the title of *Bianca e Giuseppe, or The French at Nice*. It had some success, for it was put on again in 1868 and 1870, and they played it at Frankfort in 1873.

opposite of what he had hitherto done. He himself has very well expressed the singular state in which he then found himself; how the grand opera was like a glass through which he looked at everything, and outside of which he perceived nothing clearly. In all the different parts of the opera, it was, to be sure, his subject which guided him primarily; but that subject he determined, unconsciously, according to the only form which then floated before his eyes, that of the grand opera.

Full of ardor for his work, he composed without ceasing during the whole winter, so that by the spring of 1839 he had finished the first two acts of *Rienzi*. But at that moment the engagement which he had at the theatre at Riga expired; and as he was completely disgusted with running about from town to town in the quality of orchestral leader, and as, moreover, the poet Karl de Holtei was going to give up the direction of the theatre to a simple tenor, he did not hesitate. He got together a little money, returned to Königsberg, where he made a mighty effort to pay his debts, then induced his wife to depart with him for Paris, where he knew absolutely nobody. It was the unknown, but the unknown which might in a short time be fortune and glory — with *Rienzi*.

THE SLEEP OF BRUNEHILD.
From the Schultze & Muller Nibelungen-Ring, 1881.

CHAPTER II

THREE YEARS AT PARIS

NSTEAD of taking the overland route, and probably for economy's sake, Wagner embarked with his wife and dog, a magnificent Newfoundland, on a vessel sailing between Pillau and London. The voyage, which lasted for more than four weeks, and was fraught with peril, remained always in his memory. Three times, off the coast of Norway, the vessel encountered a frightful tempest, which forced the captain to take refuge in the nearest port.

This passage through the narrows by the Norwegian coast made a very vivid impression on his imagination, and it was in the midst of the raging elements that he heard the sailors sing with terror that legend of *The Flying Dutchman*, which took so strong a hold upon him. Wagner spent eight days in London doing nothing but roam about the city. He was much interested by his visit to Parliament, but not once did he step inside a theatre. Then he crossed the channel.

Once landed at Boulogne, he learned that Meyerbeer was spending a season there for the sea-bathing, and he lingered about the place for a whole month, in order to make the acquaintance of the celebrated composer, and to gain some assistance from him. Meyerbeer received his compatriot very kindly. He examined the two completed acts of *Rienzi*, declared himself pleased with them, and asked the young

author if he had the wherewithal to live comfortably while he was trying his fortune in Paris. On receiving a negative reply, he gravely shook his head; nevertheless, he promised Wagner to aid him as much as it might lie in his power, but he frankly warned him that in a case of that kind, letters could scarcely be of much avail, whereas personal persistence, day after day, could not fail to have its effect. Having said this, he gave him some letters of recommendation to Anténor Jolly, director of the Renaissance, which at that time produced both dramas and opera-comique; to Léon Pillet, director of the Opera, the editor Schlesinger, and Habeneck. In fact, all that Wagner was able to accomplish in Paris, he owed to these gentlemen, and indirectly to Meyerbeer. "Do you know what makes me mistrustful of this young man?" said Heinrich Heine. "It is because Meyerbeer recommends him." And this shaft, as cutting for the protégé as for the protector, is all he has ever let fall with regard to Richard Wagner.

Wagner arrived at Paris in the month of September, 1839, and took a furnished apartment in the rue de la Tonnellerie, near the Halles, in a quarter little haunted by artists, but where he could live very cheaply. He commenced immediately his round of visits in Paris. Everywhere he saw the doors open to him, thanks to the patronage of Meyerbeer, and each evening he returned to his lodgings, delighted with the reception which he had met on every hand, and sure of immediate success. Then the admirable stage arrangements at the Opera increased his desire to see *Rienzi* very soon performed there. He did not for an instant doubt his success, and he did not believe it could be long in coming. So he hastened to finish this work, at the price of daily privations. He saw everything equally rose-colored on the part of the Renaissance, where the director, out of regard for Meyerbeer, had agreed to accept his unfortunate *Novice of Palermo*, so quickly dispatched in an evening at Magdeburg.

Dumersan, the vaudevilliste, had been charged with translating the poem, and had performed his task so well, that these new verses appeared to Wagner to adapt themselves better to his music than those which he had written himself. Finally the young musician believed himself so sure of success, with an opera well suited to the French taste, upon a subject a little light, that he did not hesitate to leave his old quarters at the Halles, and establish himself at No. 25 rue du Helder, in the heart of elegant and artistic Paris. Schlesinger, on his side, had not been backward in helping the protégé of Meyerbeer. He obtained a promise from Habeneck that the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire would try an overture, which his young friend, desiring to put the whole drama to music, had undertaken to compose for Goethe's *Faust;* and Wagner, highly pleased with the good news, worked away at it with joy and enthusiasm.

Wagner had lived in Paris only six months, — for all this happened during the early part of 1840, — and he already felt sure of having an opera played at the Renaissance, and an overture performed at the Conservatoire, while awaiting *Rienzi*. All at once the scene changed. He had finished his overture in the month of February, they tried it on the last of March, and the editor Schlesinger hastened to insert in the *Gazette Musicale*, the following little notice: "An overture by a young German composer of very remarkable talent, M. Wagner, has just been rehearsed by the orchestra of the Conservatoire, and has won unanimous applause. We hope to hear it immediately, and we will render an account of it." The truth was, that the performers had declared this overture "a long enigma," and had decided not to play it. There remained *The Novice of Palermo*, the performance of which was looked for from day to day. One morning, towards the middle of April, Anténor Jolly assembled all his artists and employés, and announced to them that he was at the end

of his resources, and that notwithstanding the recent success of *The Chaste Susanna*, he found himself under the necessity of closing the theatre.

It is impossible to say exactly what the overture to *Faust* was worth at that time, since Wagner completely changed it, after having finished the *Rheingold*, but it is very difficult to believe that it was inferior to those of *Rienzi*, or *The Flying Dutchman*, which are contemporaneous; and when one reflects that the society executed at about the same time an overture to *Jeanne d'Arc*, by Moschelés, it seems that it might have shown itself more hospitable towards Richard Wagner. The latter, quite discomfited, laid aside his overture, which was performed after a fashion at Dresden, in 1844, and he never thought any more about completing his musical *Faust*. It is strictly true that if we have only an overture in place of a complete score of *Faust*, we are indebted for this loss to the gold-laced musicians of the Conservatoire in 1840.[1]

One other attempt still remained to miscarry. Paris was then occupying herself with the affairs of Poland, and a grand performance for the benefit of the Poles out of work, had been organized at the theatre of the Renaissance, through the labors of Princess Czartoryska, who had recruited soloists and chorus singers from the fashionable world, and at whose house they had rehearsed all winter. The celebration was fixed for

[1] Wagner altered this overture at Zurich in 1865. As an inscription, he has put the following lines from Goethe's drama: "The God who inhabits my soul can stir it unto its very depths, but he who reigns without me can awaken no response in my breast. Thus existence is a burden to me, I long for death, and life is odious to me." In its final form, this overture, bearing a strong impress of sorrow and passion, is a creation of the first rank, a work which stands by itself. It is not treated, indeed, in long crescendo, like the magnificent overtures of *The Flying Dutchman*, of *Tannhäuser* and *The Meistersinger*. It is of a conception not more admirable, but more free, which permits him to follow closely all the phases of the drama, and to interpret them with a striking truthfulness. A masterpiece, in a word, only comparable to the overture to *Faust*, which Schumann wrote in 1853.

Friday, the 3d of March, and they were to represent a Duc de Guise, who was no other than the Henry III and his court, by Dumas, arranged as an opera by a noble amateur, and set to music by the young Flotow. The principal interpreter was quite a young girl, called Anna de la Grange, who was to render her name famous. Wagner, recalling the overture of *Polonia* which he had composed, and which he had vainly proposed to the *Concerts Valentino*, carried it bravely to the leader of the orchestra at the theatre, a man named Duvinage, and the latter promised to look at it; but nothing could be done for a poor devil of a musician in the midst of this busy and fashionable world, and his overture was not even discussed.[1]

Wagner saw vanish in an instant all his various chances for success. Moreover, he had exhausted his resources while laboring to become famous, and had been obliged to buy on credit all the furniture necessary to fill his new lodgings. But

[1] Wagner quitted Paris without reclaiming this overture; what was his surprise on learning, forty years later, that it was in the hands of M. Pasdeloup. One of his friends at Paris undertook to trace the matter back, and after a minute and careful research, he succeeded in getting at the facts. Behold through what a series of adventures *Polonia* was obliged to pass. Duvinage had kept the unclaimed overture for nearly twenty years, until one fine day, M. Henri Litolff, who gave piano lessons to his daughter (now Mme. Theodore Dubois), begged him for the overture, and Duvinage gave it to him. Litolff, no doubt with the best intentions, sent it immediately to M. Arban, who wished to play it at some Casino concerts, and the latter, in order to try it, had ordered the copyist of the Italian theatre, to separate it into several parts. Then Arban, as well as the copyist, had totally forgotten it, so that it got mixed in with a mass of old papers of Ventadour; and the editor Choudens, having bought all this music in the lump, after the failure of the director of *Escudier* (April, 1879), was quite surprised to discover a manuscript by Wagner among the sheets of unclassified music. He spoke of this overture to M. Pasdeloup, who borrowed it, never played it, and in his turn, put it in the rubbish pile, when it was reclaimed from him, in Wagner's name, first by the person who made all these researches, then by M. Nuitter. It was thus that, in 1881, Wagner regained possession of a work lost since 1841, and that he arranged to have it performed that year to celebrate his wife's birthday. He thanked his friends in Paris very warmly for the pains which they had taken in the matter.

before paying for his furniture it was necessary that he should earn means of support for himself and wife. There was no longer any dog to care for: he had been stolen before they moved to rue du Helder.

The editor Schlesinger was still his providence. He ordered several articles of him for his journal, the *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, of which the first, "On German Music," appeared in the month of July, 1840. Then, as he had come into possession of the score of *La Favorite*, performed in December of the same year, he gave Wagner the task of making a transcription of it for the piano,—a thankless undertaking certainly, if not a complicated one; but Wagner was only too happy to do anything that would enable him to exist. He continued to knock at every door, and after repeatedly importuning the director of the Variétés, and possibly with the aid of Dumersan, the translator of *The Novice of Palermo*, he was asked to set to music a vaudeville which this same Dumersan had just written with Dupeuty, *La Descente de la Courtille*; but at the first rehearsal the actors declared his music impossible to execute, and they were obliged to renounce it. This carnival folly was played Jan. 20th, 1841, and did not even contain the song, *Allons à la Courtille*, popular at the moment, and which everybody, one after another, attributed to Wagner: a double error, so it appears.

Among other things, he tried composing ballads for French words. He aspired to the fame of Madame Loïsa Puget, to the reputation of Schubert, and put to music first a translation, made expressly for him, of the *Two Grenadiers*, by Heinrich Heine, a composition somewhat labored, very inferior to that which Schumann had written the previous year for the same poem, and which the artists did not like. Afterwards he wrote *L'Attente*, by Victor Hugo, *Mignonne*, by Ronsard, *Dors, mon Enfant*, all of them simple and charming within their small limits, and which we admire to-day, but which he

was not able to have performed then, for lack of singers to sing them, and publishers to publish them. They were, literally, too good for the public taste. He did get a small return from *Mignonne* when it was printed in the *Gazette Musicale*; and this melody was afterwards republished with the two others in the supplement of Lewald's *L'Europa*. In this connection it should be noticed in what pressing terms Wagner, in a letter dated April 1841, submits these three songs to the editor of the journal, and asks that he shall be paid for them as quickly and as much as possible, since the price for such productions varied from five to nine florins ($2.00 to $3.75).

Meanwhile, his articles, which showed an original and energetic personality, were having quite a success in a limited circle, and his story entitled *A Pilgrimage to Beethoven*, published toward the end of 1840, was such a striking mixture of poetry and jest, enthusiasm and bitterness, that Berlioz, a good judge of such things, thought it worthy of a review in the *Journal des Débats*. He gives an account of a concert organized by the *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, that indefatigable journal which gives so many good things to its subscribers, — beautiful concerts, good criticisms, fine portraits of artists, and charming stories; and he adds, "For a long time to come will be read one by M. Wagner, entitled *A Pilgrimage to Beethoven*."[1] Little did Berlioz know how truly he spoke.

Whilst working for Schlesinger he pursued without ceasing the composition of *Rienzi*, aiming no longer at the Opera of Paris,— he denies afterwards ever having thought of it,— but at the Dresden Opera, where there were artists of the first

[1] The articles by Wagner for the *Gazette Musicale* were translated by Duesberg, who was intrusted with editing all the German stories for this journal. As for knowing how much his articles or his arrangements paid him, that would be quite impossible; for Wagner, always short of money, has perhaps received four or five times the price stipulated for his labor.

rank, Schroeder-Devrient, Tichatschek, etc.; he arrived at the end of his task in November, 1840. Then, encouraged by his success as an author, and driven by the direst poverty, he wrote with all his might to earn a living.

It was just at this time, in the beginning of 1841, that he published the story, so bitter and so sad, called *A Foreign Musician in Paris*, where, putting himself in the scene, with his well-loved Newfoundland dog, he describes with a virulent pen, the hopes which he had foolishly cherished, all the disappointments which he had encountered, including the loss of his dog, before arriving at the final discouragement, awaiting the liberating death of his hero. Said he, in speaking of this hero, who is no other than himself, "He was an excellent man, a worthy musician, born in a little town of Germany, died at Paris, where he had suffered so much. Possessed of a great tenderness of heart, he never could see the unhappy horses maltreated in the streets of Paris, without shedding tears. Naturally gentle, he suffered himself without anger to be dispossessed, by the gamins, of his share of the narrow sidewalks of the capital. Unhappily he joined to all that, the conscience of an artist of scrupulous delicacy. He was ambitious, without talent for intrigue. Moreover, in his youth he had once seen Beethoven, and this excess of good fortune had so turned his head, that he had never been able to regain his balance during his stay in Paris." This imaginary person is so plainly copied from himself, with his love for animals, that in the dialogue which follows, and which one would call inspired by the *Neveu de Rameau*, as much from the form as from the place of the scene, the *café de la Rotonde*, one recognizes perfectly all that he undertook to do in Paris, to no purpose; long waits in the ante-rooms of the directors, melodies written in the style of Schubert which nobody was willing to try; refusal of an overture composed by a disciple of Beethoven, by those who seemed most to admire that grand master,

etc. To which a sceptical and disillusioned friend, into whose mouth he has put some of the counsels which Meyerbeer had given him, responds with warmth, "Allow me to interrupt you. Beethoven is deified, you are perfectly right, but mark well that his reputation and his name are now accepted and permanent things. Give an idea that a piece proceeds from that great master, and his name will be a talisman powerful enough to reveal beauties on the instant, and as if by magic; but substitute for that name any other, and you will never be able to attract the concert director's attention to the most brilliant passages of that same piece." Wagner rebelled at this idea.

Meanwhile, Maurice Schlesinger, thinking only of how he could console the poor musician for his ill-luck at the Conservatoire, decided to have a composition by him performed at one of the concerts which the *Gazette Musicale* offered its subscribers; and this fine project was put in execution on Thursday, February 4, 1841. His choice was fixed on the overture of *Columbus*, which was modestly put at the head of the program. Naturally it was noticed in the same journal of Schlesinger's. "Does this piece, which has rather the character and form of an introduction," said the critic Henri Blanchard, "deserve the name of overture, which the author so well defined recently in his articles in the *Gazette Musicale?* Has he wished to depict, by the high tremulo of the violins, the infinity of the deep, of the horizon which seemed without limit to the companions of the celebrated navigator? The appearance of the brass instruments recurs too uniformly and too persistently; besides, their discordance, which shocks trained and sensitive ears, prevents a proper appreciation of M. Wagner's composition, which notwithstanding this misfortune, has appeared to us the work of an artist having large ideas, and knowing well the resources of modern instrumentation."

Thus it is curious to observe that in this work, written at the age of twenty-two, Wagner already made use of the high

tremulo of the violins, and of the sharp attacks of the brasses, which have since served him so often and so marvelously.

This very modest execution was slightly echoed in Germany, thanks to Schumann, who mentioned the concert in his journal, calling attention to the fact that among the numbers on the program there was an overture by Richard Wagner, "a young Saxon," wrote he, "who remained silent for a long time, and who, by good luck, has begun to compose again." Encouraged by this little success, Wagner hastened to send his overture to London, hoping that Jullien might perform it in his promenade concerts; but the eccentric leader did not want it, and when the postman of the coach establishment of Lafitte and Caillard brought back the roll to the composer, the latter was too poor to pay for carrying it from London to Paris, and the postman calmly replaced the roll in his pack; thus was the overture lost forever.[1]

Wagner, in his distress, went so far as to present himself as chorus singer at a little theatre in the boulevard. "I came off," said he, "still worse than Berlioz, when he found himself in a similar situation. The leader of the orchestra, whose duty it was to examine me, suddenly discovered that I knew nothing at all about singing, and declared that he had nothing there for me."

Happily for him, there was at that time in Paris quite a numerous colony of Germans — artists, scholars, literary men — for the most part poor enough, but full of kindly feeling, and who certainly contributed to sustain Wagner and his wife through that terrible winter. But outside of that circle he felt

[1] This unhappy incident was related by Wagner himself in 1880, to one of his friends, who wished to find out what could have become of the overture during the forty years. The coaches existed no more; after having searched all over Paris, he discovered that the old M. Caillard, very aged, but in his right mind, was living next door to him. He determined to call on him, neglected it for several days, and when he went down one morning, he saw that they had put black on the neighboring house. He knew then that the old man was dead.

himself completely isolated in Paris, and it was among musicians that he counted the fewest friends, each busying himself with his own affairs, and having no time to join fortunes with another. Besides, he did not feel himself drawn toward any one of them. Of Meyerbeer, then sovereign master at the Opera, with *Robert le Diable* and *Les Huguenots*, he had from the first, without showing it, the opinion which he afterwards expressed, when he believed that such sentiments would no longer hinder any one from distinguishing between the man and the artist. As for Halévy, he judged that his lofty enthusiasm had lasted just long enough to obtain for him a great success, after which he had thought only of making a fortune out of his operas, imitating the negligence and indifference of Auber. Alas! if he had only been able, like his model, to acquire an appearance of style, appreciable in the loosest productions. As to Auber himself, he did not regard him more favorably, although at the time of *La Muette* he had defended him out of opposition to Rossini and the Italian school. He had no sympathy with him; however, he attempted once to praise him in the *Gazette Musicale*, to the detriment of Donizetti, Rossini, etc., but the director, Edouard Monnais, refused his article, not wishing to have French patriotism mixed up with a question purely musical, or rather commercial, since Schlesinger, publishing at the same time *La Muette*, *Guillaume Tell*, and *La Favorite*, desired that his journal should extol equally the three composers. The only one whom Wagner admired, in spite of his repellant nature, was Berlioz. "There is between him," said he, "and his colleagues in Paris, this essential difference, that he does not compose his music for money. But he cannot write for pure art either; the whole sense of beauty escapes him. He stands quite by himself in his peculiar line; he has nobody on his side except a troop of adorers who, stupidly, and without the least judgment, salute him as the creator of a brand-

new system of music, and have completely turned his head. With this exception everybody shuns him as a madman."

It was at Paris that he for the first time met Franz Liszt, and the first relations between these two artists, who in course of time became such great friends, were most reserved, and by no means promising. Wagner showed a frank disdain for the noisy reputation of the great pianist. He held mere virtuosity in contempt, and felt that Liszt suffered himself to be governed by the public, even to giving proof of the worst possible taste, even to executing, for example, a fantasia on *Robert le Diable* at a concert organized for the purpose of raising a monument to Beethoven. He deplored the difference between the situation of a dramatic composer who can only disclose himself to an audience partly composed of amateurs, and that of a virtuoso, who easily triumphs before no matter what assembly. Then he compared himself with the celebrated pianist, and came to regard his own isolation before the public, not as an evil, but as a blessing, as a safeguard against the dangerous friendship of outsiders. And when he had turned these ideas well around in his mind, he went up to his room, and there, all alone, put them on paper. He boldly entitled this article *The Vocation of the Virtuoso and the Independence of the Composer*, and carried it to the *Gazette Musicale*, where it appeared in 1840. Out of conceit with the musical world of Paris, he renounced in these moments what had been his fondest hope, to conquer Paris, and he fell into a painful despondency, wearied alike by the performances of Liszt and Chopin, the songs of Duprez and of Mme. Dorus-Gras, the everlasting trills of Rubini. Duprez and Rubini had completely disgusted him with the bad music which they wrote ordinarily, and which was confidently applauded by an audience which called itself select, being gathered from the wealth and aristocracy of Paris. He found no interest in the luxurious representations at the opera,

which, to be sure, he frequented but little, for lack of money, and saw there only a pretext for staging and scenery. "Whoever," said he, "has seen Halévy's *La Juive*, only in a German town, will never succeed in picturing to himself how and why that work has been able to charm the Parisians." The Opera Comique, on the whole, would have pleased him better than the Academy of Music and the Italiens, at least on account of the singers; but everything that was written for the theatre then seemed to him absolutely detestable. "Where has fled, alas! the grace of Méhul, of Nicolai, of Boïeldieu, and the young Auber, before the ignoble quadrille-rhythms which are the rage at present?"

Notwithstanding a few passing gratifications, like the success of an article, or the execution of an overture, which brought small relief to his poverty, Wagner, crushed in his aspirations, suffered keenly in every way from the hardships and privations of the material life and from the cruel deceptions of a legitimate self-love. A ray of light suddenly brightened his existence, and the down-trodden artist felt a new life awaken within him. With the letter of recommendation from Meyerbeer to Habeneck, he had found a ready welcome at the Conservatoire, and the concerts of the Conservatoire, consecrated to the worship of Beethoven, brought him sweet consolation. He could at least attend the rehearsals, and each time he delighted in a symphony by Beethoven, rendered to perfection. That was the only thing, he said, which gave him an unalloyed satisfaction. And behold one day, he hears, oh marvellous! an incomparable execution of the *Choral Symphony*, the like of which he had never even suspected at the concerts of the Gewandhaus at Leipsic. Aroused, enchanted, breathless with enthusiasm, he feels himself carried back ten years in listening to this work, the favorite of his adolescence, and he thinks now to understand it for the first time, so deeply does he penetrate into its infinite beauties.

He feels a light enter his soul, he banishes the idea of creeping along in the beaten paths of *Rienzi*, he rejoices in being spurned by the Académie de Musique, where he would be forever lost in a style inferior and conventional; he perceives a glimpse of the ideal of his life in this masterpiece of Beethoven.[1] "It was," said he, "as if a scale had fallen from my eyes, as if a curtain had just been lifted."

He did not know which to admire most, the admirable application of the performers, or the energy displayed by Habeneck, who, after having worked all one winter on this symphony without succeeding in making it any clearer to his orchestra, had kept at it for two or three winters, and never left it until it had thoroughly penetrated the sensibilities of his musicians.

"Besides," adds he, "Habeneck was a leader of the old school; he was unmistakably the master, and all obeyed him." As an additional good fortune, *Der Freischütz*, in its original form, was represented for the first time in Paris, on the 7th of June, 1841, a *Freischütz* modified, it is true, by the laws of the French Grand Opera, augmented by recitatives and ballets, but without a note of it changed, and put on the stage with a religious respect by Berlioz; the *Freischütz*, in short, to which he had owed the first ravings of his youth. Ah! this time he hesitates no longer, and this double apparition of the German fatherland incarnate in Beethoven and in Weber awakens in the exile, as by a miracle, all his energy.

"Oh, my splendid fatherland, how must I love thee, how must I dream of thee, were it only that *Der Freischütz* was born under thy skies! How must I love the German people

[1] The concerts of the Conservatoire entered on their thirteenth year in 1840. There were then eight concerts in the season, one every fortnight, starting from January. It was at the concert of the 8th of March, 1840, that Wagner first heard the *Choral Symphony*, and he heard it again on the 2d of March, 1841, and the 9th of Jan., 1842, for they played it once a year during the three winters that he spent in Paris. After that, they did not play it again until 1849,

which loves *Der Freischütz;* which believes even yet in the wonders of the most simple of the legends, which feels even yet, in its manhood, the mysterious and fascinating terrors which agitated its youthful breast! Oh, thou bright dream of Germany! Reveries of the woods, reveries of the evening, of the stars, of the moon, of the village bell which sounds the curfew! How happy is he who can comprehend and believe, feel, dream, and ramble with thee."[1]

And immediately he put himself to work. He felt that he must give vent to the ideas which were confusedly boiling up in his brain, and which he had already put on paper, audaciously lending them to the author of *Fidelio*, in his imaginary visit to Beethoven.

"The sounds of the instruments, although it is not possible to state their true signification, pre-existed in the primitive world, as organs of created nature, and even before there were men on the earth to receive these vague harmonies. But it is quite otherwise with the genius of the human voice; that is the direct interpreter of the human heart, and explains its sensations, abstract and personal. Its domain, then, is essentially limited, but its manifestations are always clear and precise. Now unite these two elements; construe the vague and abrupt sentiments of nature by the language of the instruments, in opposition to the positive ideas of the soul, as represented by the human voice; and the latter will exercise a luminous influence over the former, by regulating their outbursts, and moderating their violence. Then the human heart, opening to receive these complex emotions, enlarged and expanded by these infinite and delicious presentiments, will receive with enthusiasm, with conviction, this species of intimate revelation of the supernatural world.

"The opera is not my business (let us not forget that it is Beethoven who is supposed to be speaking); at least, I do not

[1] Richard Wagner d'après lui-même, p. 131.

know of a theatre in the world for which I would engage to compose a new work. If I were to write a score conforming to my own instincts, nobody would listen to it, for I would put into it no little airs, nor duets, nor any of that conventional encumbrance which serves at present in the construction of an opera, and that which I would put in its place would shock the singers no less than the public. They know only the delusion and the musical emptiness disguised under brilliant exteriors, the nothingness arrayed in tinsel. He who would write a lyric drama truly worthy of the name, will pass for a madman, and he would be one indeed, were he to expose his work to the criticism of the public, instead of keeping it to himself."

And that which Beethoven apparently would not have dared to attempt, Wagner undertook. A feeling of rebellion against the destiny which overpowered him, had made him a writer; at that time he was on the point of giving himself up to satirical writing, but the awakening of his conscience and the realization of his ability, led him to return to his natural calling, and to devote himself to music. During nine months he had made only common arrangements of operas, and written some magazine articles, which appeared at Paris in the *Gazette Musicale*, at Dresden in the *Courrier du soir*, or in *l'Europa* by Auguste Lewald, to which he sent, under the pseudonym of Freudenfeuer, a series of letters entitled now *Parisian Amusements*, and now *The Misfortunes of a German at Paris*.[1]

For a moment he had believed that fortune was going to

[1] In one of these articles he rails good-naturedly at Scribe, whom he represents taking his morning chocolate and giving audience to a number of visitors, while carrying on at the same time the construction of twenty pieces with as many different collaborators. In another, he speaks at length of Berlioz, whom he designates as a genial musician. He says, "He who would listen to his music must put himself out to go to him, for he will not find it anywhere else, not even in the places where one encounters Mozart and Musard side by side."

return to him with Meyerbeer. The latter returned to Paris just as Wagner had reached the last stage of his misery. He took pity on the young German, and recommended him to Leon Pillet, with so much persistence, that Pillet allowed Wagner to entertain the hope of writing a score for the opera. This time Richard Wagner could not contain his joy. He went to his home in a fever, and took no rest until he had finished at least the outline of the work, for which he already caught a glimpse of the most marvellous stage-setting, — such as could not be realized except in Paris.

After having obtained permission from Heinrich Heine to utilize the treatment which he had made of an English piece of the same title, he wrote with good success the rough sketch of *The Flying Dutchman*, which legend he had heard from the sailors on the open sea, at the height of the tempest. He made all haste to carry the sketch to Leon Pillet. But Meyerbeer had departed in the interval, and the director, struck by the poetic coloring and the originality of the subject, proposed simply to buy it of him, and get somebody else to set it to music. It would be quite to his advantage, added this seeming saint, as such an opera could not be put on the stage for four or five years, owing to previous arrangements. Now Wagner was tired of hawking himself about on all sides; whereas, having before him all the necessary time, he could compose another, and easily console himself for this trifling sacrifice. Spent with fatigue, Wagner felt that it would be useless to argue, and replied that he would reflect. While he was reflecting, he learned that Leon Pillet had already spoken of this sketch as belonging to himself, and that if he did not give it up with good grace, he would probably be relieved of it through trickery. After all, the money which he would receive in exchange, would insure his existence for a little time, at least, and permit him to compose with a mind free from care, since he had decided to return to

music. Therefore, reserving all rights in Germany, he accepted Leon Pillet's proposition and sold his sketch for five hundred francs.[1]

So then he threw criticism to the winds, and devoted himself to composition. The spring of 1841 was at hand; as much to flee his creditors, who were becoming unmanageable, as to be able to compose with more freedom, far from the annoyances and bustle of the city, he went to live at Meudon, near some fine woods which attracted him, in a little house, partially occupied by the proprietor, an old man of eighty, who looked no more than forty; an ardent legitimist, who loved to talk about the ancient court, and who had lost at the revolution of July a pension on the royal exchequer of a thousand francs. He occupied himself with painting pictures, execrable, it is true, but Wagner felt reassured, since painting was not a noisy trade.

Behold then, one fine day, as he is serenely tasting the tranquillity of the country, he hears appalling sounds proceeding from the cellar. He hastens to the spot, and finds the old man engaged in manufacturing a machine to combine the sounds of the harp with those of the piano; the painter was a collector and inventor of instruments! Wagner had a great deal of difficulty in dissuading him from this abominable combination, but he finally succeeded, and was able to proceed in peace with the composition of *The Flying Dutchman*. His first idea had been to treat this subject as a concert piece with a single scene, a "dramatic ballad"; he now took it in hand again, cut it up into three acts for the theatre, and the poem once completed, he set to work on the music. But when he

[1] *The Flying Dutchman*, arranged as a French opera in two acts by Paul Foucher, and become *Le Vaisseau Fantôme*, with music by Diestch, was performed at the Opera on Nov. 9, 1842. Wagner had already left Paris, and only learned from a distance of its failure, which, it must be confessed, gave him a certain satisfaction; it was played only eleven times.

found himself face to face with the piano, which he had brought with him for his work, he was seized with a painful disquietude; after so many months spent in writing, in criticising or arranging the works of others, was he himself still capable of composing? He walked about the instrument with a veritable anguish. At length he opened it, tried it, and produced at the first effort the Spinning Song and the Chorus of Sailors. Wild with joy, he jumped up, and raised to heaven a cry of triumph; he was a musician forever! In seven weeks the whole opera was composed; but when he had arrived thus far, material annoyances again overtook him, and although he had the overture nearly finished in his head, he was obliged to wait two long months before he could put it on paper.

Were not the unpleasant predictions, which the preceding year he had put into the mouth of his friend, the giver of counsels, now completely realized! "The public! you are right. I am of the opinion that with your talent you might hope to succeed, if you had to deal with the public only; but it is in thinking it an easy matter to reach this point, that you most sadly deceive yourself, my poor friend. It is not competition of talents against which you will have to struggle, but that of established reputations and personal interests. If you are assured of an open and influential protection, then enter the lists; without that, and above all if you lack money, keep yourself carefully out of the way, for you can only fail, without even having drawn to yourself the attention of the public. It will not be a question of putting to the test your talent and your productions. Oh, no! that would be an unparalleled favor! One will merely think to inquire what name you bear, and if it be a name without reputation, particularly if it be not found on any list of proprietors or land owners, you will be obliged to vegetate unperceived, you and your talent. In short, either they will allow you to waste your time awaiting in vain the execution of your music; or else, if your compositions are

conceived in the daring and original spirit which you admire so much in Beethoven, they will not fail to find them turgid, incomprehensible, and they will rid themselves of you by this fine judgment."

As soon as he had finished his *Rienzi*, in November, 1840, Wagner had addressed it to the Opera at Dresden. A letter from Meyerbeer to the royal intendant, Baron von Lüttichau, under date of March 18, had been decisive, and on the 18th of July, 1841, the *Gazette Musicale* announced the reception of the work, adding that it would be put under rehearsal at once, in order to be performed before the end of the year. "It is certain," added the journal, "that the management is going to a considerable outlay in order to mount with an unusual sumptuousness this opera, 'which contains scenic effects of great beauty,' for the people who have examined the score are speaking well of it, and are counting on a grand success." *The people!* Was it not rather Wagner, and himself alone? After he had finished *The Flying Dutchman*, he had endeavored to get it accepted at Leipsic, and at Munich. But these two cities replied by a refusal, even adding in the case of Munich, that an opera like that could never be admitted on the German stage; and Wagner, in transcribing this decree to the director, M. de Küstner, added bitterly, "And I had believed all the time that it would be received *only* in Germany, for it struck chords which vibrate in the German heart alone."

He then sent his manuscript to Meyerbeer, who occupied at Berlin the position of capellmeister, and the latter, always interested in his young friend, managed so that he was soon able to send a favorable response to Wagner. On the 2d of April, 1842, the *Gazette Musicale* announced this news, profiting by the occasion to explain that if the representation of *Rienzi* at Dresden had been subject to delays, it was wholly due to the importance of the stage setting; it was very important, in Wagner's eyes, that no shadow of doubt should be felt on this point.

At the time that he had learned that *Rienzi* would be performed at Dresden, he would like to have departed for his beloved Germany, where it seemed to him all must smile upon him; but his last resources had been absorbed during his retreat to the country; he was no longer worth a sou. He returned miserable to Paris, took modest lodgings at No. 14 rue Jacob, in a house formerly inhabited by Proudhon; then he went again to Schlesinger to demand work of him, — and such work! He arranged for the piano *Le Guittarero, la Reine de Chypre*, taking from it all the fantasias and quadrilles that could by any possibility be found in it; and thus he spent one whole winter working hard to save up enough money for the voyage. As soon as he had gained it, he departed speedily for Dresden, and felt his heart overflow with joy on touching foot to German soil. He forgot in this sweet transport the three long years of poverty which he had spent in Paris, and in which, in his eyes, he had lost more than life; he had lost creative force and moral energy.

HERR RICHARD WAGNER TRIES HIS "MUSIC OF THE FUTURE" ON THE SENSITIVE EARS OF JOHN BULL.

CHAPTER III

RIENZI AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN AT DRESDEN

IENZI was represented at Dresden on the 20th of October, 1842. From the moment that Wagner had set foot in this city, he had felt himself rightly placed, surrounded by friends, and people prompt to help his opera over the difficulties which always hamper the work of a beginner. The opera at Dresden was one of the best in Germany, and the theatre, newly reconstructed by the architect Gottfried Semper, was large enough to hold sixteen hundred people. They had left nothing undone in trying to make it as nearly as possible like the opera at Paris, and had even engaged French artists to decorate the *salle* and paint the scenery. At its head was the royal intendant, Baron von Lüttichau, an amiable man, but with mediocre talents for the fine arts, and the troupe counted at that time at least three artists of the first rank; the baritone Waechter, the celebrated tenor Tichatschek, and finally the illustrious Schroeder-Devrient, that artist of genius and woman of soul, whom Wagner dreamed so long of having for an interpreter. Unfortunately she was already advanced in her career, and while travelling about, by dint of singing indiscriminately masterpieces and worthless music for twenty years, she had contracted certain faulty tendencies, which Wagner and Berlioz have both pointed out, — like the habit of introducing spoken

interjections into a song, of exaggerating her importance in a scene, in order to eclipse all by her personality, etc.: — nevertheless she remained, notwithstanding these defects, which increased with age, an artist of superior inspiration, and thoroughly imbued with the tragic genius; she was precisely the one to sing in *Rienzi*.

But how had this opera, signed by a German composer, been able to find favor with its judges in a city where they liked only that which proceeded from France, or from a foreigner? "When the manuscript of *Rienzi* was received at Dresden, it came near being rejected without examination. The Paris postmark puzzled the royal intendant, who decided to look into the manuscript, together with the capellmeister Reissiger, the leader of the chorus Fischer, and the tenor Tichatschek. The name was unknown, the score enormously thick; so the director and the capellmeister were inclined to refuse it. But the tenor, whom the journals of Dresden compared to Duprez, was attracted by the heroic tone of the composition. He foresaw for himself a creation after the manner of the great roles in *La Muette* and *William Tell*, and with the support of Fischer, he finally succeeded in obtaining an acceptance of the work."[1]

And Wagner, on his arrival at Dresden, had been received by these two partisans with a sympathy and cordiality which seemed all the sweeter to him after so many disappointments and humiliations. "I will never forget," he has said, "the good which this reception did me; it was the first encouragement which had ever come to the young artist so rudely shaken by destiny."

This opera, which Wagner had so well succeeded in fashioning after the model of the French opera, with fine decorations, grand ballets, stately processions, hymns of war,

[1] *Richard Wagner*, by L. Bernardini, after *Richard Wagner's Leben und Werken*, by M. Glasenapp (Leipsic, 1882).

and religious invocations, was accordingly in the taste of the day at Dresden, where they desired, as in most of the large cities of Europe at that time, only imitations of the French opera, set off with music sufficiently commonplace, but developed at length, and of a powerful sonority. Everywhere and always the cry was Halévy.

From the time that the rehearsals commenced, Wagner experienced a satisfaction quite new to him, on observing the interest which the singers took in their roles, the zeal which they manifested, and the compliments which they bestowed upon him more warmly from day to day. At length arrived the day for the representation (Oct. 20, 1842): this was a real triumph, both for Wagner and for the principal interpreters; for the tenor Tichatschek, admirable in the rôle of tribune; for Mme. Schroeder-Devrient, a very pathetic Adriano; and for Mlle Wüst, a touching and seducing Irene. The roles of Stefano Colonna and of Paolo Orsini were taken by Dettmer and Waechter; those of Raimondo, Baroncelli and Cecco del Vecchio by Reinhold, Joachim Vestri and Carl Risse. On the next morning, Wagner, dismayed at the length of the performance, which lasted six hours to a minute, went to the theatre for the purpose of indicating the portions to be omitted; but when he returned in the afternoon to make sure that it was being well sustained in all the parts, the copyist excused himself for having done nothing on account of the indignant objections of the singers. "I will allow nothing to be taken from my role," cried Tichatschek; "it is too charming." And the others, all said the same thing. During the next ten days two representations were given before crowded houses, with increased prices; and when, at the third, Reissiger laid down the baton in honor of the young musician, there was a wild enthusiasm in the house. In a word, Wagner was the hero of the day, — at least in Dresden.

At Leipsic, where reigned the classic influence of Mendels-

sohn, his success was less pronounced. On the 26th of November, 1842, at a soirée given at the Gewandhaus by Sophie Schroeder, the niece of Madame Devrient, Tichatschek and Mme. Devrient sung, one the prayer of Rienzi, the other the air of Adriano. Immediately Henri Laube undertook to extol his friend. By a mischance, as these selections were preceded by a duet from the *Templier*, by Marschner, he confounded them, and bravely announced that "these three pieces were very dry, and wanting in character." To make amends, he demanded of the young author some notes on himself, — this was the nucleus of his autobiography, — and he published them in the *Journal du Monde Elégant*, with a portrait of Wagner by Kietz; this was a seal put upon his fame. "What!" said he later, in his *Communication to my Friends*, "I, so lately isolated, abandoned, without hearth or home, I found myself suddenly loved, admired, even regarded with astonishment! Moreover, from the effect of this success, I found a solid and durable basis for well-being in my nomination, as unlooked for as it was surprising, of royal capellmeister of Saxony. Was it not natural that I should abandon myself to sweet illusions, destined, however, to be dissipated by a sad awakening?"

On the 30th of October, the *Gazette Musicale* of Paris announced that the opera of its former collaborator had borne away a brilliant success at Dresden, and that never before had public enthusiasm manifested itself with such ringing applause, the author being called before the curtain three or four times; then, in a following number, the same journal inserted a long letter, to which it may be supposed without too much improbability that Wagner was not an entire stranger. The enthusiasm of the public steadily increased, it said in substance, and people could not get over their surprise at seeing a young man, hitherto unknown, spring so high at a single bound, and place himself instantly by the side of illustrious musicians;

but what was most amazing was to find, united in the same artist, two qualities so different as those of poet and musician. It would take a long time to recount the annoyances and disappointments endured by the author before he was able to see his piece performed, as from the time it was first rehearsed at the piano, a cry was raised against the excessive difficulty of the music. A similar thing had been already seen, and people would remember the interminable discussions raised by *Fidelio*, of which several portions had been declared inexecutable; but Beethoven was at that time in the meridian of his glory: he overpowered by his name and his will everything that opposed itself to him; whereas a young composer, without reputation, found himself disarmed when facing artists who inveighed against a work and refused to execute it. Notwithstanding all, he was not discouraged: he succeeded in transforming this ill-will into zeal, into extraordinary enthusiasm; and the colossal success of the work finally recompensed all his efforts, for in spite of the increase of prices maintained until after the seventh evening, no diminution was perceived in the audience. Excellent singers, admirable stage settings, enormous receipts, everything that could be desired, they had, according to this correspondent. And the music? He does not say much, it is true, but it is carefully written. "In order to give a description of its many beauties, it would be necessary to make a thorough analysis of the score, — a difficult task, which others can fulfill better than I. I will confine myself to saying (and this is the unanimous opinion of the connoisseurs of whom I am the organ), that this music bears throughout the stamp of originality, that it abounds in new and inspired motives. The instrumentation, very rich, displays all the resources of the orchestra, without, however, drowning the voice. On the whole, it is the work not of a beginner, but of a finished master."

This judgment, with its modest reserve at the outset, its

reference further on to *Fidelio* and Beethoven, is tantamount to a signature at the foot of the article, — and it would be that of Richard Wagner.[1]

Rienzi differs in no respect from the great French works then applauded, the plan of which, with the airs, duets, trios, etc., he reproduced exactly; but, even if it be an imitation, an exaggeration of the operas of Spontini, with whom Wagner is evidently inspired for the recitatives and the general declamation, it must also be recognized that this imitation is marked, in certain parts, with an individuality, and that the style of the composer begins to dawn here and there throughout the opera. The work, as a whole, is modeled on all those of the same epoch, and yet the author attempts several forms to which he will often have recourse later on, such as the frequent use of the high tremulo on the violins, and the melodious progressions, falling back into a delicious *pianissimo* after having reached their maximum crescendo; one may already detect a marvellous skill in wielding the orchestra, and of obtaining from it unusual effects; but more than these, certain pieces, like the beautiful prayer of Rienzi, different episodes, like the scene of the interdict, magnificent in every particular, both as to the music and the situation, reveal a future master in this beginner.

This is what the Parisian hearers might have recognized in 1869, instead of jesting; this, so it would appear, was realized by some amateurs of Dresden in 1842, since they confessed "to have undergone a transport of enthusiasm, caused

[1] The portrait given here is probably the first one of Wagner, engraved on wood by Kietz in 1843, and reproduced later by lithography at Zurich, during his sojourn in Switzerland. It was then that the master would have added beneath it this manuscript thought, of which we may thus render the spirit, if not the exact text: "The creator of the work of art of the future is no other than the artist of the present, who embraces the life of the future, and desires to participate therein. He who, conceiving this desire, finds within himself the means of realizing it, perceives already a new life; only the artist has this power."

RICHARD WAGNER, IN 1843.

by the strangeness of his methods, which had appeared to them to announce a creative genius, destined to direct art into new channels." And Fétis, in his hatred against the author, quotes this estimate, in order to show how signally Wagner had failed to live up to the prediction of these connoisseurs; and after all they had not judged so badly.

"This work, in which is found the ardor, the splendor which youth strives after," writes Wagner in his *Letter on Music*, "is the one which has obtained for me in Germany my first success, not only at the Dresden theatre, where it was first represented, but at many of the theatres where it has been given since then, with my other operas. I have conceived and executed it under the sway of the emulation excited in me by my youthful impressions of the heroic operas of Spontini, and the brilliancy of the Grand Opera at Paris, where were borne down upon me works bearing the names of Auber, of Meyerbeer, and of Halévy. I am to-day far from attributing to this composition a particular importance, for it does not mark very clearly any essential phase in the development of the views on art which dominated me later. Moreover, it is not my purpose by any means to parade here, before your eyes, my triumphs as a composer, but rather to give you an explanation concerning the problematical tendency of my ideas.

"This *Rienzi* was finished during my first stay in Paris. I had before me the splendors of the Grand Opera, and I was presumptuous enough to conceive the desire, to flatter myself with the hope, of seeing my work represented there. If ever this desire is to be accomplished, surely it would seem strange to you, as it did to me, that fate should have allowed so long a time to slip by between the desire and the realization, and heaped up disappointments which drove all hope from my heart."

Immediately after the success of *Rienzi*, the Dresden

theatre began rehearsing *The Flying Dutchman*, and although the singing personnel was in Wagner's opinion insufficient, particularly the tenor charged with the role of Erik, the first representation was given on the 2d of January, 1843. The baritone, Waechter, gave an artistic representation of the Dutchman, and Mme. Schroeder-Devrient held the role of Senta, which was one of her most powerful creations.[1]

It met with a success which at first it seemed must equal that of *Rienzi*, but which soon died away for the good reason that the public did not find in it that degree of theatrical pomp and musical uproar with which it was so charmed in the preceding work. At Paris, the *Gazette Musicale*, always prompt to eulogize anything concerning Wagner, at once proclaimed the success in a notice in which it was a question of nothing less than "genius." At the end of February, when the failure was a settled fact, it published a short article, explaining that the second opera of Wagner had achieved a success at least equal to the first, greater, perhaps, in regard to the means of execution which the author had been able to command. "In *Rienzi*, the pomp of the spectacle, the grand concerted pieces, and the dramatic effects of a more complicated action, would naturally dazzle the public, and militate in favor of the author. There is nothing of all that in *The Flying Dutchman*, where, save the final scene and the appearance of the fantastic ship, all is simple, and quite devoid of the effects which the public is accustomed to see in the operas of the day. It is in reality a ballad put in action. One would suppose that music of this kind would be little liked, but it has been quite otherwise. It has made a vivid impression on the large numbers who have witnessed it, and in the second act, which was a decided triumph, enthusiasm knew no bounds. Author and actors were called for, and received with acclama-

[1] Daland, Erik, and the nurse Mary, were Dettmer, Reinhold who had already played in *Rienzi*, and Mme. Waechter.

tions which amounted to a frenzy." It is easy to embellish when writing from afar.

In order to console Wagner for this failure, they made haste to put *Rienzi* on again; but the success of a work which he considered at best an imitation, could not lessen the author's disappointment at seeing come to naught the first, the only opera in which he had really put something of himself. However, five months had not elapsed before the *Flying Dutchman* was played at Riga with success, in May, 1843, and at the same time there appeared in Schumann's Journal, the *New Musical Gazette*, an article in which the new opera was saluted "as a signal of hope that the German genius would soon cease to be forever tossed about on the seas of foreign music, and that it would find at length a hospitable haven on German shores."

Moreover, the poem had been submitted to Spohr, who had judged it a "masterpiece," and who had desired to become acquainted with the music; after having seen it, he arranged to have this opera performed at the theatre at Cassel, on June 5th, and immediately announced the success to Wagner, while urging him "to persevere in the right path." One recognizes there the old champion of pure German art, against the music from beyond the mountains and beyond the Rhine. Spohr was the only musician, representing the former generation, who from the first recognized and saluted in Wagner a musician of genius. "*The Flying Dutchman* interests me most deeply," he wrote to his friend Lüder, while the opera was being rehearsed. "This work is full of imagination, of noble invention, well written for the voice, very difficult, and too much loaded with instrumentation, but overflowing with new effects; on the stage it will surely appear clear and intelligible. . . . I have come to think that of all the composers for the theatre, Wagner is actually the most richly gifted." This double success, at Riga and at Cassel, at length decided the directors of

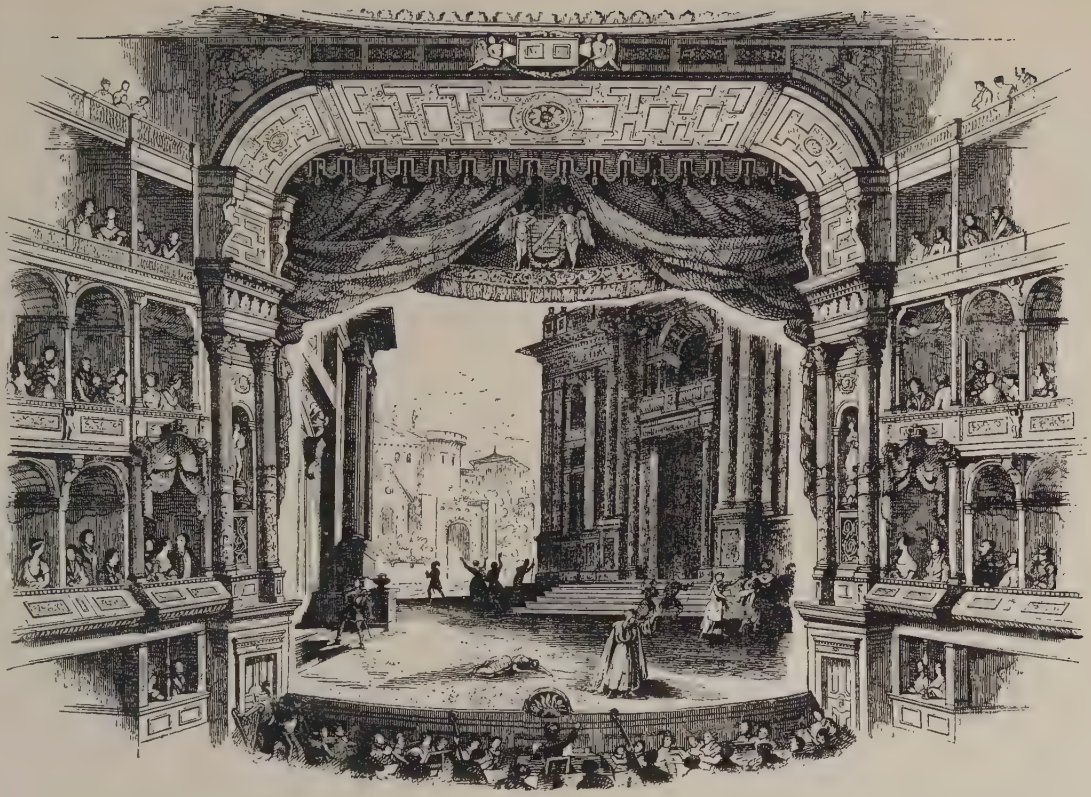
the theatre at Berlin to play an opera which they appeared to have received solely out of politeness towards Meyerbeer, and for which Wagner was much put out, going personally to Berlin without obtaining anything. Finally, *The Flying Dutchman* was represented there in the early part of 1844; but on the second evening the house was empty, and they could not proceed with it.[1]

In *The Flying Dutchman* Richard Wagner has unquestionably done the work of a creative poet, since he had no other materials to utilize than the five or six pages in which Heine had summed up the melodrama by Fitzball, which he had seen played at London, and the legend itself, recounted to him by the credulous sailors during the tempests which retarded his voyage from Pillau to London. His first intention was to make this opera in one act, from which it will be seen that the splendors of his Parisian ideal had already paled before his eyes, and that he had begun to draw rules for the form of his conception from another source than that of the broad sea of official publicity. "I do not know what poetic value may be attributed to this poem," adds he, "but what I do know is that while composing it, I felt a freedom which I did not know when working out the libretto of *Rienzi*; for in the latter I had in mind only the plan of opera which would permit me

[1] Here is what the Paris *Musical Gazette* says in its issue of February 4, 1844: "They have represented at Berlin the new opera of Wagner, *The Flying Dutchman*. This work has met with some success. The first representation was directed by Meyerbeer, the second and third by the author." Note that according to this article, proceeding from we well know whom, the third representation had already taken place, but in the following number (February 11), the journal, perceiving that it had been premature in its announcement, rectified it incidentally, in a paragraph extremely flattering: "The good fortune of our former collaborator, Richard Wagner, increases every day in Germany. They are mounting at Hamburg his opera of *Rienzi*, for a representation which will be given by the celebrated singer Tichatschek, of Dresden. The third representation of the *Wandering Dutchman* (*Hollandais errant*) is expected at Berlin, and the young composer has just finished a work entitled *Tannhäuser*.

to unite all the forms allowed in, and even demanded by, the grand opera, properly called: introductions, finales, choruses, airs, duets, trios, etc., and to employ therein all the magnificence possible. In *The Flying Dutchman*, the thing which principally concerned me was, not to depart from the most simple lines of action, to banish all superfluous detail and low intrigue, and on the other hand to give unusual attention to developing the features calculated to show in its true light the characteristic coloring of the legendary subject; that coloring seeming to me quite appropriate to the inward motives of the action, and consequently identified with the action itself."

It is dating from this opera that Wagner instinctively made a change in the character of his subjects, and that abandoning, not without a mind to return, the field of history, he made a first excursion into that of the legend. He has been pleased to say that this resolution was thenceforth final, but he forgot, in thus speaking, that he always experienced a hesitation in choosing between a subject of the legendary order and one of a historical character, each time that he undertook a new work. In adopting the legend, he freed himself from all detail necessary for describing and representing historical fact and its vicissitudes, and found himself thenceforth rid of the obligation to treat poetry, and above all, music, in a fashion which he judged incompatible with the means of expressing these two arts. The legend of any epoch or nation to which it might belong, seemed to him to contain exclusively all that was purely human in that epoch or that nation, and to present it in a form very forcible, and therefore intelligible at first sight. "It is thus that a ballad, a popular refrain suffices," said he, "to show in an instant this character with the greatest distinctness. In short, then, the legendary character assures a double advantage of great importance in the execution; for on the one hand the simplicity of the action enables the eye to take it in easily at a glance, permitting no



REPRESENTATION OF "RIENZI," AT DRESDEN, OCT. 20, 1842.
(Act IV, last scene).—After an engraving of the time.

distractions in the way of explanations of exterior incidents, and on the other, the greater part of the poem may be thus devoted to the development of the inner motives of the drama, because these motives awaken sympathetic echoes in the depths of our heart."

So much for legend in general, replacing history in Wagner's mind, as a frame-work for musical drama; but what particular motive, what secret attraction had induced him to choose the legend of *The Flying Dutchman?* One may discover there in another form the myth of Ulysses in former ages, the legend of the *Wandering Jew* in the Christian world, both myth and legend resting on an essential trait of human nature, namely, the ardent desire for eternal repose amid the repeated storms of life. "Thus," said he, "in *The Flying Dutchman* we find again, prodigiously developed, the fundamental trait of the old Grecian myth. The tale of the sailors dates from the period of the great voyages of discovery. In it the people have wrought a remarkable fusion of the two preceding types. The Dutch navigator is condemned by the devil (visible symbol of the winds and waves), to wander without rest for all eternity upon the sea: that is the punishment of his temerity. The end of his suffering is death, to which, like Ahasuerus, he aspires. But this deliverance, refused to the wandering Jew, he may obtain through the sacrifice of a loving and courageous woman who shall consecrate herself to him. The desire for death leads him forth in search of the woman. But this woman is not Penelope, the wife, the guardian of the domestic hearth; it is the woman in general, as yet unknown, but desired and foreseen, in whom the instinct of the feminine heart shall be infinitely developed,—in a word, the woman of the future." Lost as he was then in Paris, which roared about him like the ocean, Wagner recognized in himself this unhappy navigator, beaten by the storm, and he was himself consumed by the same thirst for rest as his

hero, for final rest with a true woman, symbol of the domestic hearth and of the ideal fatherland.

"Such conditions," says Wagner, "I did not yet know; I could only long for them. However, my Hollander had not discovered the new world; his wife could save him only by dying with him. *En route, donc, et en avant.*" [1]

How had he arranged for the stage this myth in which he himself reappears, the only work of his which then merited the name of poem, and the first of a long series which extends from *The Flying Dutchman* to *Parsifal?* From a frightful tempest, two vessels seek shelter in a hospitable harbor. The first which nears the shore has for a captain a Norwegian navigator, whom the winds have taken seven miles out of his course. "The storm nears its end," says he to his sailors. "Go to rest; to-morrow we will depart." And all the crew fall asleep, lulled by the song of the pilot watch, who dreams of home, of the joy of returning, and soon gives way to sleep while thinking of the absent loved one. Then the storm returns with a terrible violence, and another ship, shaken by the fury of the sea, a black ship, with blood-colored sails, approaches in its turn, and casts anchor. A phantom crew noiselessly executes the manœuvre; a man descends to the shore and sadly cries, "The term is passed; seven years have fled! The sea has cast me on the earth with loathing. Oh! proud ocean! In a few days thou must bear me away again! No tomb! no death! Such is my terrible sentence of condemnation. Day of judgment, day supreme! When wilt thou dawn upon my night?" It is the Flying Dutchman, the Wandering Jew of the sea; it is the ancient blasphemer, condemned to wander on the deep until he shall have found a woman faithful unto death. In seven years the sea has cast him ashore for only one short moment. The two captains

[1] Richard Wagner, d'après lui-même.

accost each other, and the Hollander asks shelter of the Norwegian Daland for several days, causing to glitter before his eyes the bait of unnumbered treasures. Finally he says, "Hast thou a daughter? Would that she might be my wife! I would never return to my country. What does it profit me to amass riches? Be convinced, consent to this alliance, and take all my treasures." The old mariner agrees at least to bring him face to face with his daughter, and the sea having calmed, the two make their way to the port, where they wait on the daughter of Daland.

In the house of the Norwegian, near a cheerful fire, the pensive Senta, with her nurse and her friends, sigh for the return of the seafarers; but while the young girls sing, and gaily turn the spinning wheel, Senta alone, absorbed with sad musings, does not once take her eyes from a certain sombre portrait hung upon the wall. They question her; then, as in an ecstasy, with a passion which thrills and transfigures her, she points out to her companions the horrible destiny of the mariner condemned by fate to wander always on the sea, and never to die. The unfortunate man, driven back by the tempest each time that he wished to weather a dangerous headland, had one day cried in anger, "Well, I will overcome this unsurmountable obstacle if I struggle through all eternity." And Eternity had accepted the challenge of the audacious mariner.

Neither the rallies of her companions, nor the anxious prayers of the hunter Erik, her lover, can calm the ardent desire for sacrifice which seizes this young girl, and bears her irresistibly towards the condemned one. Suddenly she cries, "Oh! that he might appear! I would love him faithfully unto death!" The door opens; Daland appears conducting his guest by the hand, and Senta, recognizing her mysterious loved one of the sombre mien, flies quickly towards him. When her father has left her with the stranger, she devotes herself to his comfort, and swears fidelity unto death. The

brief respite expires. The condemned must again take to the sea, and already the silent preparation for departure has commenced. Then Senta feels herself weaken, while listening to the tender reproaches of Erik, whom she fondly loved before learning what a fatality rested upon the poor mariner. She yields to the sweet remonstrances of the young lover, and when the Hollander comes to take her away, she falls into the arms of Erik. It is then settled; there is no redemption pos-

FINAL SCENE OF THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN," AT DRESDEN (1843).

sible for the despairing mariner. He goes back to his ship, and again takes up his eternal voyage. "To the sea! to the sea!" cry the sailors, and the merciless tempest resumes its fury. The ship departs. Then Senta desires to follow it; her father, Erik, her friends try in vain to hold her back; she escapes them, scales a cliff, and precipitates herself into the waves. Suddenly the accursed vessel is swallowed up by the

sea, and the hero and Senta are seen to appear in the clouds, transfigured by love and devotion.

In the score of *The Flying Dutchman*, operatic melody dominates still, but there is a manifest tendency, in each separate page, as well as in the work as a whole, to merge the different parts into a musical and poetical unit, entirely homogeneous. The author had yet to abandon the practice of cutting up his music into definite parts, although the point of connection with the recitatives already tends to disappear; he had yet to give up making his personages sing together, to repudiate cavatinas and cadenzas, and to avoid subordinating everything at times to mere vocal effect; but notwithstanding these numerous traces of conventional opera, this work leaves on the mind a deep impression.

This proceeds at least as much from the poem as from the music, and especially from the attempted fusion between these two elements of the opera; I repeat, of the opera, for Wagner, it must be emphatically stated, never employed any other title until after the completion of Lohengrin. Here there is no longer mere juxtaposition, as in the case of Berlioz, who also composes both his verses and his music, but not together. With Wagner, the birth of the two is simultaneous, and one clearly perceives in *The Flying Dutchman* that the germs of the poet and the musician, unfolding successively in the same individual, and developing singly, are here forever joined, that they will henceforth move on together, indissolubly united in the pursuit of a common ideal, dreaming, conceiving, laboring, and creating from one and the same impulse. And precisely herein consists the great originality of Richard Wagner.

Assuredly, however, he does not yet detach himself from Gluck, since he does not hesitate to repeat words in order to produce a purely musical effect, and his declamation very plainly proceeds from this model. Neither is he freed from the influence of Weber, which is especially felt in the admir-

able handling of the orchestra, in the terrific color of the supernatural episodes and in the fresh simplicity of certain melodies; but these reminiscences are already becoming blended with a powerful personality, not merely reproductive, but creative in character. The true superiority of *The Flying Dutchman* over *Rienzi*, consists in the author's rejection of everything not directly related to the drama and which if introduced could serve only to dazzle or to bewilder; here again he employs the forms of the opera, but he subordinates them irrevocably to the drama. To this he was tending when he adopted the myth as subject matter in the place of history, and to this he will attain.

Another new element which should be noted in the *Flying Dutchman*, is the first appearance of the characteristic melody which was to be of such material aid to Richard Wagner in the attainment of his ideal. And, as he repeatedly asserted afterwards, what has always been called his "system" was so little the result of preconceived ideas of a *parti pris*, that this innovation was, in the beginning, the effect of chance. He himself has related that when he composed the *Flying Dutchman*, he wrote first the ballad of Senta, which became, as it were, the musical pivot of the whole work; and that later, as he approached the different situations of the drama, they evoked in him the same melodies which they had at first suggested, melodies which tended to modify or develop themselves according to the feelings excited. By following this natural impulse, it would then have been possible for him to build his whole work upon the development of two or three essential melodies; this is what he was to arrive at afterwards, but he was still too much imbued with the operatic methods of the day not to follow the ordinary course and force himself to find almost as many different motives as he had pieces to compose. However, the idea had appeared, and it had now only to germinate.

If a new charm, a powerful impression of strength and of individuality is imparted by the *ensemble* of *The Flying Dutchman*, it must also be said that certain fragments, such as the overture, the chorus of the sailors, the ballad of Senta, the song of the pilot, and, above all, the bursts of despair or of love on the part of the unhappy condemned, are absolutely original creations of Richard Wagner. And, notably, the overture, a true masterpiece, is based upon the struggle between two opposing motives, which we may call, as we will, damnation and deliverance, perdition and salvation, sensual pleasure and redeeming love, or pedantic science and free genius. In any case, the good finally prevails over the bad, and the same conflict was often to be represented later, always with incomparable grandeur. It would have been very singular if a work so individual, while it repelled its hearers taken in a mass, had not found some zealous admirers, — strange, whimsical people, it is possible, but endowed with minds open to new impressions. Such admirers Wagner found, and the faithful adherence of these unknown friends was so gratifying to him after the grievous blow which he had suffered, that he immediately formed a new resolution. "From Berlin, where I was entirely unknown," he says in his *Communication to my Friends*, "I received from two utter strangers, who had been attracted towards me by the impression which *The Flying Dutchman* produced upon them, the first complete satisfaction which I had been permitted to enjoy, with the invitation to continue in the particular direction I had marked out. From this moment I lost more and more from sight the veritable public. The opinion of a few intelligent men took the place in my mind of the opinion of the masses, which can never be wholly apprehended, although it had been the object of my labors in my first attempts, when my eyes were not yet open to the light. I now arrived more and more at a clear understanding of my aim, and, in order to make sure of being

FINAL SCENE OF THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN,"
at the Lyceum Theatre, London. (1876.)

followed, I no longer addressed myself to the masses, which had nothing in common with me, but rather to the individuals, whose dispositions and sentiments were analogous to my own. This surer position with reference to those who were to receive my communications, exercised thenceforth a very important influence upon my artistic nature." Then let Fétis laugh; it will not prevent a really superior artist from always acting thus more or less radically. In order to please everybody at once, it is necessary to compromise; and in questions of art, he who compromises is sure to disappear in a short time.

RICHARD WAGNER IN HEAVEN

Richard Wagner addressing the Angels: "A very pretty welcome, my dear angels, but without kettledrums and trombones you can never produce an effect." (*Kikeriki* of Vienna, Feb 18, 1883.)

CHAPTER IV

RICHARD WAGNER CAPELLMEISTER AT DRESDEN — LA VESTALE AND SPONTINI — RETURN OF THE ASHES OF WEBER — THE NINTH SYMPHONY — IPHIGENIE IN AULIS

THE representation of *The Flying Dutchman* was given Jan. 10, 1843, and within eight days thereafter, Wagner had achieved, as orchestral leader, a great personal success, which was to result in his being established at Dresden in much easier circumstances. Since *Rienzi* had first seen the light, the death of the deputy capellmeister Morlacchi, and that of the musical director Rastrelli, had caused two vacancies. Reissiger, left alone with the double duties of capellmeister and theatre manager, had accepted Morgenroth as deputy capellmeister; furthermore it had been decided that in view of the importance of the work at the theatre, the new capellmeister who should be appointed, should devote himself exclusively to the orchestra. The qualities of which Wagner had given proof while directing *Rienzi*, and also the success of this opera, seemed to point him out as a likely candidate for this office; but he hesitated to present himself, so thoroughly disgusted was he with his former hard and thankless labors at Königsberg and at Riga. However, the necessity of living somewhat dimmed these recollections; his wife and friends represented to him that he could ill afford to let escape him a permanent employment with a fixed salary. Accordingly he decided to try his

chances against Ludwig Schindelmeisser, Dorn's brother-in-law, whom he had formerly known at Leipsic, and who believed himself sure of success. The latter chose for his *concours* representation *La Vestale*; Wagner, perhaps in remembrance of his early adoration for Weber, chose *Euryanthe*, and Weber brought him good luck. He aspired at first, so it appears, to the post of musical director only, at nine hundred dollars: but through the influence of Baron von Lüttichau, he obtained that of capellmeister at eleven hundred and twenty-five dollars, and the commission was delivered to him at the end of January, 1843.

The ceremony of his presentation at the chapel where he took the oath, took place on Feb. 2, the next day after Berlioz had arrived at Dresden on his first journey through Germany, finding his friend all aglow with a very natural joy. It is before Berlioz, who was present at his rehearsals, that Wagner was to exercise his authority for the first time, which he did with great zeal and courage; Berlioz himself bears witness to this, and his word is not to be doubted. The French master heard *The Flying Dutchman*, and the last three acts only of *Rienzi*, which they had decided to perform in two evenings, owing to its length. He does not appear to have paid much attention to this work, and its subject did not make a lasting impression on his mind; he remembers only "a beautiful prayer in the last act, and a triumphal march modelled, but not servilely, after the magnificent march *d'Olympie*." He appreciated "the sombre coloring, and certain stormy effects well suited to the subject" in *The Flying Dutchman*, but he remarked an abuse of the tremulo, which he considered a sign of laziness and lack of invention on the part of the author. On the whole, the interpreters seem to have impressed him more than the works themselves. Mme. Devrient, ridiculous enough as a young boy in *Rienzi*, raised herself in his eyes in *The Flying Dutchman*; Tichatschek

was, said he, passionate, brilliant, heroic, captivating in *Rienzi*, while Mlle Wüst had been appropriately given the insignificant role of Irene; finally, the baritone Waechter had produced a most profound impression upon him, with his pure and perfect talent; his voice, exceptionally beautiful, had a smooth and vibrating *timbre*, and also great power of expression, though the artist put ever so little heart and sensibility in his song, and these two qualities, said Berlioz, Waechter possessed to an extraordinary degree. Berlioz departed, but his memory was cherished at Dresden, for, some time afterwards, when Wagner had his overture to *Faust* performed, they took it for a fragment of the *Damnation of Faust*, and applauded it accordingly. Which of the two should be the more displeased at this mistake?[1]

The position held by Wagner was far from constituting a sinecure. There were performances to conduct every evening in the year, at least three pieces, and generally three or four different operas a week, to say nothing of the ordinary music, and the exceptional court concerts; such was the labor to be divided between the musical director and the two capellmeisters, the first directing the representations and superintending the church music during the week; the two others conducting at the church on Sunday, and each being responsible for the good execution of certain operas. In accepting these heavy duties, Wagner had not only yielded to the desire to assure to himself an honorable living; he was also possessed of the hope that he might exert a happy influence upon the opera at Dresden, and by reaction, upon art in general. But he had no sooner put his hand to the work, than he encountered the same indifference, and the same prejudices, which he had been unable to overcome elsewhere. He had occupied his

[1] At this concert, given on July 22, 1844, for the benefit of the poor, he had performed, besides his overture to *Faust*, the *Pastoral Symphony* and Mendelssohn's *Walpurgis Night*.

post scarcely three months, when he underwent a first attack, *apropos* of a representation of *Don Juan*, which he had directed April 26, 1843, with a profound admiration for Mozart, but with an execution according to his own convictions. He found that his rendering departed sensibly from the current tradition at Dresden; tradition good or bad, coming from Mozart himself, or introduced by the capellmeisters, Morlacchi and Reissiger, it mattered little, but a tradition all-powerful, and which no one but a madman would wish to modify. They took pains to let him see it; the old amateurs exclaimed at the scandal, and a certain critic, outdoing them, declared that the author of *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman* was a barbarian incapable of comprehending Mozart. This cry goes back far enough, as you see, and it is not a thing of yesterday that people have sought to characterize Wagner as a savage, fond of hub-bub, while opposing to him the seraphic and melodious master of Salzburg.

Wagner, through his position, was in the pay of the court, and was required to play a rôle in the official fêtes; it is thus that he wrote the music of a hymn composed by the advocate, Hohlfeldt, for the inauguration of the statue of the late king, and directed the execution of it, on June 7th, 1843, in the presence of the sovereign, the body of the state, and the deputations of the kingdom. A year later, when Frederick Augustus returned from a voyage to England, he composed the words and the music of a cantata, entitled *Salute to the King*, which was sung on the 12th of August, at the summer residence of Pillnitz. Meanwhile, he had written a more important work, dedicated out of gratitude to Madame Charlotte Weinlig, the widow of his first master who had just died, and these are the circumstances under which he had composed this grand biblical tableau of *The Last Supper*. In his capacity as leader of a men's choral society, the Liedertafel, he had been chosen with Reissiger to organize and direct a general

reunion of all the singing societies in Saxony. The fête commenced on July 6, 1843, with a monster concert at the Frauenkirche, the largest church in Dresden; the singers, twelve hundred in number, were grouped upon a platform erected in the choir, and behind them, higher yet, was the orchestra, composed of five hundred artists and amateurs. The sovereigns arrived precisely at midday, and immediately the festival commenced. The piece by Wagner came last; this is how he had conceived it: the Disciples being assembled together to celebrate the Lord s Supper, the Apostles arrive bearing the news that it is forbidden them, under pain of death, to teach in the name of Jesus. All feel their courage weaken, and in their distress they supplicate the Father to send the Holy Spirit to succor them. Then are heard voices from on high; they announce to the suppliants that their prayer is heard; the wind roars, the earth trembles, and, filled with the divine spirit, the Apostles and the Disciples go forth to convert the world. A chorus of forty men represented the forty Disciples assembled, and in order to render better the effect of the heavenly voices, Wagner had arranged to have this invisible choir sing from the height of the cupola. This arrangement, purely material, and of which the author later on made good use in his *Parsifal*, was all that criticism touched upon in this new work; it was agreeably diverted by it, and remained deaf to the admirable crescendo which announced the descent of the Holy Spirit, and which the orchestra, silent until then, construed with marvellous power. To what end does one possess genius prematurely?[1]

The management of the theatre had decided to make a

[1] "This last work, the conception of which is most daring" — wrote at Paris the habitual correspondent of the *Gazette Musicale* — "has produced an extraordinary effect, and one which it is impossible to describe; the king, after the concert was over, summoned the young author to him, and testified his satisfaction in the most affectionate terms."

formal revival of *La Vestale* during the autumn of 1844, and since it appeared certain to succeed with such a Julia as Mme. Schroeder-Devrient, Wagner, moved by a feeling of admiration for Spontini, who had just left the direction of the opera at Berlin under circumstances painful for his self-love, had persuaded the Baron von Lüttichau to invite the old master to come and direct his opera. This being agreed upon, he would allow no one but himself to extend the invitation, and accordingly wrote a letter to Spontini in French, which produced the desired effect, for the master replied that he accepted with pleasure, and had no doubt of the excellence of the interpretation. Unhappily, he naïvely indicated such unreasonable requirements regarding the number of performers and musicians in the orchestra, that Wagner, quite distressed, hastened to the intendant and to Mme. Devrient, to acquaint them with his embarrassment. The latter, who knew Spontini very well, laughed goodnaturedly at the imprudence committed, but offered at the same time to repair it, and as the old master had shown in his letter a desire to return to Paris as soon as possible, it was agreed to notify him of an indefinite postponement, occasioned by an indisposition of Mme. Schroeder, who served thus as scapegoat. This was done, and they went on rehearsing, troubling their heads no further about Spontini, until, just on the eve of the general rehearsal, he unceremoniously tumbled in upon Wagner, and demonstrated to him, letter in hand, that in arriving at that date he was conforming strictly to the instructions sent him, and that he was thenceforth at the disposal of his friends at Dresden; he would not go away until after the opera had been played.

Notwithstanding this unexpected blow, Wagner thought at first only of the pleasure of having the greater composer near him, and of hearing one of his operas under his own direction; he persuaded himself that all would go wonderfully well, and in order to remove from his mind the last mental

reservation, he proposed to him to direct the general rehearsal fixed for the following day. Spontini's face fell; then, after a moment's hesitation, he asked Wagner what style of baton he was accustomed to use for conducting. The latter indicated the size of an ordinary baton; then the master sighed, and asked if between that time and the morrow it would be possible to have made for him an ebony baton, of an extraordinary length and thickness, finished off at the two ends with large ivory balls. Wagner replied in the affirmative, and Spontini retired perfectly satisfied. As soon as possible Wagner hastened to spread the alarm, and to interview the carpenter, who promised to construct an ebony baton according to the required conditions. The following day at the desired moment, Spontini had his baton; then, instead of taking it by one end, like any other leader, he grasped it with his full hand around the middle, and brandished it like a marshall's baton.

From the first scenes it was evident that nothing went according to the taste of the composer, and that he intended to make a fresh study of the whole opera. He attempted, while jabbering the most outlandish German, to correct the faults of the orchestra, the shortcomings of the chorus, and even the manœuvres of the supernumeraries, whom he made begin all over again, directing them himself with an indefatigable perseverance. Then Wagner recalled the analogous evolutions executed at Berlin, which had so impressed him in *Fernando Cortez*; he understood also that at Dresden they would never adopt that mechanical precision, which produced almost a startling effect. In short, at the end of the first act, singers, musicians, manager, all begged a release. Wagner took Spontini aside, and spoke some words of deference, assuring him that his wishes should be carried out, and that in order to more easily accomplish them, they would send at once for Edouard Devrient, who was perfectly familiar with *La Vestale* as produced at Berlin.

All was to commence anew. The *personnel*, especially the leader of the chorus, was furious; Wagner alone had not a black look for Spontini, so thoroughly did he admire the extraordinary energy which the latter evinced in "pursuing and maintaining a goal in dramatic art nearly forgotten in his day." He was struck by his habit of treating without consideration the most famous of the singers; he profited by his demands to improve upon the former arrangement of the orchestra; he laid before him certain doubts, and profited by his judicious explanations; he noticed the energy with which he insisted on making the rhythmic accents very conspicuous; in short, he was much interested in the master's representation of the lyric tragedy, and showed him a respectful devotion. Thus Spontini conceived an affection for him, and desired to reward him for his zeal by giving him a bit of charitable advice; he counselled him to renounce dramatic music. "When I heard your *Rienzi*," said he one day, when they were dining at the house of Schroeder-Devrient, "I thought, this is a man of genius, but he has already done more than he can do." And by way of explaining this paradox, he proceeded thus: "After Gluck, it is I who have made the grand revolution, with *La Vestale*; I have introduced the prolongation of the sixth in harmony, and the big drum in the orchestra. With *Cortez* I have taken a step forward; I have taken three with *Olympie*, and one hundred with *Agnes de Hohenstaufen*. After that I might have composed *The Athenians*, an excellent poem, but I have renounced it, despairing of out-stripping myself. Now, how do you imagine that it is possible for anybody to invent anything new, when I, Spontini, realize that I am unable to surpass my preceding works? and furthermore, it is very evident that since *La Vestale*, not a note of music has been written that has not been stolen from me." And Spontini supported this last affirmation with scientifically verified facts. Quite stunned

by this discourse, Wagner risked a timid objection, and asked if he did not feel himself impelled to create new forms, when approaching an entirely new subject. Spontini gave him a smile of pity. "In *La Vestale*," said he, "I have treated a Roman subject; in *Fernando Cortez*, a Spanish-Mexican subject, in *Olympie* a Græco-Macedonian subject; and finally, in *Agnes de Hohenstaufen*, a German subject; all the rest is worth nothing."

Notwithstanding this phenomenal egotism, exasperated at seeing himself supplanted by worthless musicians, Spontini, ridiculous and old as he was, ended by regaining the sympathies of the artists, by dint of energy and confidence in himself; and when he finally demanded the re-establishment of the final scene, with ballet and chorus (which they had habitually suppressed, finishing with the duet of Sicinius and Julia after their deliverance), he found nobody to object to this additional labor. It was labor lost. The performance was not a success, principally through the fault of Schroeder-Devrient, who, feeling herself too heavy for the role, by the side of a high priestess so young and charming as Johanna Wagner, aspired to counteract this disadvantage by dint of pathos, and her redoubled efforts carried her clear beyond the mark. The audience was cold, and the applause which terminated the performance was only homage rendered to the glory of the author. Wagner experienced a painful sensation at seeing him advance upon the scene, loaded with decorations, and making no end of acknowledgment for so feeble a recall. In order to escape from a more glaring discomfiture, Mme. Schroeder-Devrient still clung to the pretext of an indisposition in order to put off a second representation of *La Vestale*, Spontini having given evidence of a secret desire to be invited to prolong his stay at Dresden, and to mount there the complete series of his operas.

But suddenly he was in great haste to get away from Dres-

den; he had just learned that the king of Denmark had conferred upon him a patent of nobility, and that the Pope had honored him with the title of Count of San Andrea. He instantly forgot *La Vestale*, to the great relief of his hosts, and departed almost immediately for Paris; he left in Dresden a champion, at once skeptical and enthusiastic, in the young musician, who promised, at the moment of parting, to meditate at leisure upon his advice regarding the dramatic career—and who followed his counsels so badly.

A short time after, about the 14th of December, 1844, the ashes of Weber were brought back to Dresden, and this event, Wagner himself says, had a great influence upon the mood in which he found himself at the time of composing *Tannhäuser*. A committee had been appointed, some time since, for the purpose of bringing back to Dresden the remains of Weber who had died at London, whither he went to conduct his *Oberon*; but the propaganda was insufficient, and furthermore, they encountered the religious scruples of the king, who was unwilling to disturb the last sleep of death. Wagner, once in office, again agitated the project with an incredible energy. He was moved by a desire to render a supreme homage to a German musician *par excellence*, to him who had stirred his breast with its first musical raptures, whom he had been pleased to salute as his master, and who, during his time of trial in France, had brought him a breath from the German fatherland with *Der Freischütz*. There was nothing to be expected except through his personal effort, and furthermore, he must conquer, before all, the opposition of the royal intendant, who, seeing in Weber only an ordinary capellmeister, feared to create a precedent which would oblige them thereafter to bring back to Saxony with great honors all the capellmeisters who might die in foreign lands.

Wagner, having accepted the title of president of the committee, launched his appeals on all sides, received sub-

scriptions, organized concerts, persuaded certain second-rate theatres to give performances for the benefit of the undertaking, and obtained one at the opera of Berlin, through the influence of Meyerbeer, which brought in two thousand thalers. He manœuvred so well, that the opera of Dresden could not very well remain behind, and they soon made up the sum necessary for transporting the ashes, and for erecting a monument.

The eldest of Weber's two sons went to London in quest of the mortal remains of his father; the coffin arrived at Magdeburg on the morning of the 14th of December; in the evening, at eight o'clock, a boat, draped in black, decorated with lyric trophies and illuminated with many lanterns, transported it to the right bank of the Elbe. Then they deposited it upon a magnificent catafalque, in the centre of a circle formed by three or four hundred artists and amateurs, each holding a wax taper and a laurel wreath; then four hundred and fifty performers and singers executed a funeral hymn by Richard Wagner. After that they formed in procession and marched to the Catholic cemetery, amid the tolling of all the church bells in the city. The streets through which they were obliged to pass were illuminated by means of innumerable candles placed at the windows, and all the artists, friends and admirers who followed the coffin, together with five hundred foot soldiers of the royal guard, carried torches in their hands. Wagner had composed for the ceremony a funeral march with two motives from *Euryanthe*: the theme which in the overture describes the appearance of the phantom, joined to the cavatina from *Euryanthe*, transposed into *B flat major*. This symphonic piece, written for eighty wind instruments, to which he had added twenty muffled drums, in order to render *pianissimo* the tremulo of the altos in the overture, was of a superb grandeur, and produced an indescribable effect. At the chapel of the cemetery, Mme. Schroeder-Devrient awaited

the body, upon which she placed a magnificent wreath of flowers. The interment did not take place until the next day. When the grave had been covered, the assistants formed above it an enormous pyramid of laurel wreaths; then Richard Wagner, speaking for the first time in public, delivered an address, in which he recalled the recent death of Weber's younger son, and passed by a very natural gradation into an invocation to German national art. "There never lived a musician more *German* than thou! England renders thee justice, France admires thee, but Germany alone can *love* thee; thou art hers, thou art a beautiful day of her existence, a warm drop of her blood, a portion of her heart! Who then can blame us for having desired that thy ashes should become a portion of her soil, of the soil of the dear German fatherland?"

Every year, on Palm Sunday, they were accustomed to give a grand concert at Dresden, for the benefit of the musicians. The concerts included a symphony and an oratorio, conducted alternately by the two leaders of the chapel, who were free to choose the work which they wished to direct. Reissiger having to direct the oratorio for 1846, Wagner, who the preceding year had chosen *The Creation*, decided to play *The Ninth Symphony*. He had preserved a profound admiration for this work, and wished for nothing less than the return of the impression which he had experienced at Paris, at the concerts of the Conservatoire, while listening to Habeneck's execution of it.

But the musicians of the orchestra, besides feeling a repugnance for the considerable labor involved, feared that the announcement of this symphony, hitherto badly played and badly understood in Dresden, would have an injurious effect upon the receipts, and they waited upon M. von Lüttichau, in order to induce him to oppose the project of the capellmeister. Fortunately, the authority of the latter was absolute, and

Wagner remained obdurate. It was necessary then to leave out what he thought best, and to begin rehearsing at once. On this occasion Wagner gave a rare example of that tenacity, that authority, and those outbursts of enthusiasm, which always made him so much feared and admired by his interpreters. He devoted the whole winter to these studies. He made each part of the orchestra rehearse as many as a dozen times, and added to the chorus various singing societies, and the choirs of the Seminary and School of the Cross, attaining thus to the number of three hundred voices. He made a change in the arrangement of the platform, to the great disgust of the musicians, who would willingly have done away with the expenses of a carpenter. He drew up, and had printed, a program explaining the symphony, but more than all he undertook to act upon the spirit of his musicians, after the fashion of Habeneck, to make them feel keenly that which they executed; and as he was in thorough sympathy with this masterpiece, as he knew it by heart from the first note to the last, he succeeded in arousing these musicians to an enthusiasm equal to his own, and the execution which he obtained had the effect of a thunderbolt upon the musical world of Dresden. "It was worth the trouble of the voyage," said Niels Gade, "just to hear the recitative of the double basses." Now there were present in that enthusiastic audience of April 5th, 1846, a young man and a child, who were to be reckoned later among the warmest partisans of Richard Wagner; the young man was Hans von Bülow, then sixteen years of age, and the child, not yet ten, was the future tenor, Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld, the inspired creator of *Tristan and Isolde*.

Whilst preparing the *Ninth Symphony*, Wagner also gave his assiduous attention to a revival of *Iphigenie in Aulis*, by Gluck; indeed he gave too much attention to it for the taste of certain critics, since he re-enforced, discreetly, it is true, the orchestration of it, and modified the conclusion of the

poem, departing somewhat from Racine, in order to approach more nearly to Euripides and to Goethe. When Spontini was rehearsing *La Vestale* at Dresden, he had said one day to Wagner, "I have heard, in your *Rienzi*, an instrument which you call a *bassa-tuba*; I do not care to banish it from the orchestra; write me a part for it, for *La Vestale*." And Wagner, not wishing to do less for Gluck than for Spontini, had fancied to himself that he could take the same liberties with *Iphigenie* and yet produce the same effect which was produced at the epoch when no other instruments were used save those employed by Gluck. He acquitted himself of this delicate task with extreme conscientiousness. He procured an authentic copy from Paris, for fear that the score in use at Berlin had undergone some retouches from the hand of Spontini; furthermore, he applied himself to a very careful revision of the German text; he condensed certain parts, added some connecting links, and, as we have said, changed the *dénouement*; in short, he abandoned his personal work for a time, in order to devote himself to Gluck, and to glorify him; and he succeeded therein, for *Iphigenie in Aulis*, thus retouched, was a very great success. Certainly, this zeal and this disinterestedness are to the honor of Wagner, but he made a mistake in undertaking a work which could not have lasting results. Surely Gluck is not so antiquated, nor his orchestra so rudimentary, that his masterpieces may not still put in a good appearance on the stage. Furthermore, it is not permitted to tamper with creations of this magnitude, which form the pinnacles in the history of musical art. Such corrections are only admissible for works of a secondary order; ephemeral, good for diverting the masses momentarily, but which one would never think of offering for the study and veneration of posterity. Moreover, a single word solves the question: would Richard Wagner ever have admitted the idea that at some future time, one should do, out of admiration for him, what he

had done out of admiration for Gluck — that one should modify his orchestra, and marry Lohengrin with Elsa? Therefore, the simplest and best means for glorifying Gluck was to execute his opera just as he had conceived it. It was a doubtful honor that he rendered him, and Berlioz, on a similar occasion, has shown for the author of *Orpheus* and of *Armides* an admiration more intelligent, a zeal much more respectful.[1]

Wagner had not much to do with the music of the chapel royal, but even there the routine annoyed him, and he deplored the work which was done there. The court, being Catholic, wished only Catholics in the choir, and the soprano and alto parts were taken by young boys; in all twenty-six choristers, fourteen of them men and twelve children, besides a complete orchestra, which on great occasions could be increased to the number of fifty performers. "The echoes and reverberations in the building were deafening. I wanted to relieve the hard-worked members of the orchestra, add female voices, and introduce true Catholic church music *a capella*. As a specimen I prepared Palestrina's *Stabat Mater*, and suggested other pieces, but my efforts failed.[2]

"There was a singular relic of former days there; a *musico*, a mature and corpulent *soprano*, whose pretensions and utter stupidity amused me greatly. On fête days he refused to

[1] Berlioz, when he added some solos and a ballet to *Der Freischütz*, at least respected the orchestra of Weber, and made no changes in the score; on the contrary, he adhered to it to the extent of keeping the *dénouement*, long as it was. With respect to *re-orchestrations*, one always hears quoted those of the *Messiah* by Mozart, the *Danäids* by Spontini, the *Deserter* and *Richard, the Lion-hearted* by Adolphe Adam, etc., etc., but not one of these cases is comparable to that of Wagner, in the first place, because he modified the score, and above all, because the instrumentation of Gluck is, even to-day, neither insufficient nor antiquated. This revival of *Iphigenie in Aulis*, with *dénouement* by Wagner, took place under his directions, February 22, 1847. Mme. Schroeder-Devrient played Clytemnestra; Mlle. Johanna Wagner, Iphigenie; Mlle. Marpurg, Arthémise; Mitterwurzer, Agamemnon, Tichatschek, Achilles; and Dettmer, Calchas.

[2] Conversation with M. Dannreuther, in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*.

sing unless particular airs were reserved for him, and it was most laughable to hear this aged Colossus gargling with the graces of Hasse; one thought only of an enormous pudding, with the voice of a cracked rattle. But with all that, he had one incomparable quality: with a single breath he could sing as much and more than any other artist in two respirations."

Wagner, during his long sojourn at Dresden, had had occasion for the first time to unveil his character, in putting his ideas in practice, and at that time he had shown himself what he continued to be through life: ardent for innovation, dissatisfied with everything — which he called his highest faculty — without consideration for the opinions or prejudices of others, violent, difficult, proud to excess; but also possessed of a rare energy, and so much power, notwithstanding his faults, that he was able to draw to himself many warm partisans from among those who had attacked him the most violently at first. Those of his colleagues who had the requisite intelligence, appreciated and loved him; but he displeased almost everybody by his irritable humor, and by his indefatigable and encroaching activity. Nobody, to be sure, came to an open quarrel with him, but he was made to feel the effects of the jealousy and ill-will which existed underneath a calm exterior. His manner of conducting himself, and his overbearing temperament, had rapidly estranged from him at Dresden — the same at Paris, Munich and everywhere — the journalistic world, which pursued him with taunts and published the most absurd anecdotes about him. The accredited critic of Dresden, a particular friend of Reissiger, was posing just then as the champion of established customs, which he decorated with the high-sounding title of "classic traditions." This Schladebach, who was not without some education and merit, had begun by shielding Wagner; then he turned about and criticised everything in his operas which wandered from the beaten path. As he was the principal

correspondent at Dresden for the political and literary papers of Leipsic, Berlin, and other important cities, his judgment radiated through all Germany, and did considerable harm to Wagner. Most of the directors and musicians, taking their watchword from the journals, Wagner was pronounced, not without some truth, an eccentric person, insupportable, and difficult in temper; the pieces and scores which he presented were scarcely looked into, and more than once they had been returned to him without being opened. But these attacks, and these drawbacks had no power over a man of his stamp, so confident of his own genius, — and their violence only increased in him a natural disposition to pose as an artist not understood, beset by enemies, and much more unappreciated than he really was. What Wagner was in his country, Berlioz was in his.

WOTAN AND HIS MESSENGER RAVENS

The slipper which the ravens hold in their beaks expresses the power which the jealous Fricka exercises over her spouse Wotan; the familiar German saying, "to put on the slipper," signifies that the woman is mistress of the household.

(Taken from the *Schultze and Müller Ring of the Nibelungen*, 1881.)

CHAPTER V

TANNHÄUSER AT DRESDEN

TOWARDS the end of his stay in Paris, and while he was pretty well occupied in accumulating enough money to take him to his native country, Richard Wagner in his leisure moments read German history, with the hope of finding there a subject for an opera. For a long time he searched in vain; but what struck him the most forcibly was that the poet and musician in him were always of one mind about rejecting a subject, and when a historical subject appeared to him inappropriate for a dramatic work, it offended likewise his musical sense. This observation confirmed him in an idea which had already taken possession of him, namely, that legendary subjects lent themselves to music much better than historical ones, and yet he kept on searching through history. He had ended by selecting an episode from the latter part of the Hohenstaufen power, and had chosen for the principal personages, Manfred, son of Frederic II., and a supposed daughter of the latter, a young Saracen maiden, who raised again the fallen courage of Manfred, led him by victory after victory up to the throne, gave up her life for her brother's sake, and revealed to him, only in dying, the relationship which opposed their union. Wagner had even partially developed his plot, when one of his friends, a philologist, lent him the popular tale of Tannhäuser. It was not unknown to him, for he had formerly read the poem by Tieck, which, he

said, had not by any means pleased him; he knew also that Weber had had an idea of treating this subject musically, and it had therefore a great attraction for him. In short, this old legend, in which the principal figure is brought out very clearly and simply, fascinated him to the last degree. He was particularly pleased that it could be easily connected with the poetical tourney of the Wartburg, an episode well calculated to excite his inspiration, since it responded so marvellously to his worship for old Germany. Therefore, however scornful he may have shown himself of Tieck's poem, it did not prevent him from making use of it. Tieck, indeed, had imagined that Tannhäuser, on his way to the concours of the *Minnesinger* opened at the Wartburg, had encountered Venus, and allowed himself to be seduced by her, and Wagner, in adopting this idea, has simply added the love between Tannhäuser and the niece of the Count, a love instantly forgotten for Venus, and which in the end saves the knight, by snatching him from his perdition, through repentance.[1]

In his haste to be present at the rehearsals of *Rienzi*, he had arrived at Dresden before they were ready to take it in hand, and in order to divert himself, he made a journey into the mountains of Bohemia. He returned to Teplitz, and built the plot of *Tannhäuser*, in the same spot where, eight years before, he had traced the plan of the *Love-Veto*. He immediately set to work with great earnestness; however, he had some days of doubt after the disappointing reception accorded to *The Last Supper*; he succumbed to the need which all artists feel, of immediate applause, and he considered the expediency of abandoning *Tannhäuser* and of returning to

[1] In undertaking to trace to its source the history of the tourney of the singers, Wagner touched upon the germs of *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*. Indeed, one of the copies of the "Combat of the Singers," led to the poem of *Lohengrin*, and Wagner, drawn into reading the *Parsifal* and the *Rituel* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, "saw an entirely new world of poetry suddenly opened before him."

Manfred, which appeared to him more likely to suit the public taste, — to write, in a manner, a second *Rienzi*. He knew that Schroeder-Devrient would be marvellous in the role of the Saracen maiden, and he submitted to her his project for the drama, but she was not pleased with it, and persuaded him not to carry it out; besides, he hesitated to sacrifice his own ideas to the taste of the masses. He has himself depicted somewhat forcibly the internal struggles which then distracted him.

"The happy change in my surroundings, and the freedom of mind resulting from it, more than all, the intoxication of finding myself in contact with a new and sympathetic society, fixed in my heart a desire for immediate appreciation, which turned from its proper channel my inner nature, formed as it had been by the unpleasant impressions of the past, and the struggle into which they had thrown me. The natural inclination which leads a man after the pursuit of happiness, tempted me into an artistic path which was very soon to end in profound dissatisfaction. The fact was, I could find happiness only in acquiring the name of artist, and that was possible only on condition that I should sacrifice my true nature to the taste of the public. I must give myself up to the pursuit of the caprices of fashion, I must lend myself to all the meannesses of speculation, which, at the point where I had arrived, I felt sure would kill me with very disgust. Thus the positive pleasures of life presented themselves to me under the single form which our modern world has given them; and in order to obtain them, it was necessary for me to apply my artistic faculties to exigencies, the worthless character of which I knew only too well."[1]

He came out conqueror in this internal struggle, and once for all, he sacrificed *Manfred* to *Tannhäuser*, the work which

[1] Richard Wagner d'après lui-même, p. 176.

he would have made according to the taste of the public, to that which he aimed to make conform to his ideas upon art; but truth to say, he nourished a secret hope of reconciling the two, and of gaining the good will of the masses, without abandoning even one of his ideas. But this project, as we shall see, was doomed to failure. He had completely finished *Tannhäuser* in April, 1844, and submitted it to a first revision, which he had achieved in the month of December. He had worked at it with much animation, and had finished it in such a heat of inspiration, that he had risked having the complete score lithographed from the manuscript; in 1845 he sent a copy of it to Carl Gaillard of Berlin, with a long and interesting letter. "The piano arrangement has already been prepared so that the day after the first representation, I shall be free. My intention is to be idle for a year or two, to spend my time in reading, and produce nothing. A dramatic work, to be significant and original, must mark a step forward in the life and culture of the artist; but one cannot take such a step every six months."

Notwithstanding the failure of *The Flying Dutchman*, the management of the opera of Dresden received *Tannhäuser* eagerly, and took great pains to have it worthily represented; the decorations had been ordered at Paris from Dieterle, and the best singers were placed at Wagner's disposal. But the music baffled them. First of all, Tichatschek was given the role of Tannhäuser, all the high passages of which had to be modified, because he found them too fatiguing; an excellent baritone, Mitterwürzer took the part of Wolfram; the niece of the author, Johanna Wagner, made a gracious Elizabeth, and Mme. Schroeder-Devrient figured as a rather mature Venus; she had accepted this role merely to be obliging, declaring that she could make nothing out of it: "You are a man of genius, said she to Wagner, but you write such eccentric stuff that it is impossible to sing it." Dettmer and Schloss

had the roles of the Landgrave and Walther; Waechter, Curti and Riss represented Biterolf, Heinrich and Reimer, and Mlle. Anna Thiele was the little shepherd.

The first representation was given on the 19th of October, 1845, before a crowded house, more curious than sympathetic; they particularly wished to know if the author had persevered in the path which he had entered with *The Flying Dutchman*, or if that set-back had decided him to return to the accepted style of opera, in which he had made so marked a success with *Rienzi*. Richard Wagner had persisted in his new ideas, and the public were greatly disappointed. The performance was a downright failure, notwithstanding the reports spread by certain French narrators, including Gasperini, who spoke of ovations, of recalls, of crowns, of triumph. And the principal cause for this serious failure, was the scene of the return from Rome, where Tannhäuser recounts his unhappy voyage, and his interview with the Pope; this being admitted to be the only drawback to an otherwise admirable creation. Until then, the performance had dragged along in a rather spiritless fashion, and the different scenes of the drama were received with more or less favor, according to the amount of melody and *éclat* which the hearers found in them. The scene of the Court of Venus, in particular, much less important than it was to become in course of time, and badly sustained by Mme. Schroeder-Devrient, who foresaw only too clearly that she would not do herself justice, had indifferently prepared the audience; they understood very little of it, in spite of the explanation of the legend of *Tannhäuser*, which the author had drawn up and had placed at the head of the libretti, which were sold at the door. After that, however, the final septet of the first act had made an excellent impression, and they had recalled the author with the singers. Then the march and some very clear melodies in the second act had been more warmly received, and Wagner was again recalled, a common enough occurrence in

Germany, where the author is usually recalled at the close of the performance. They had simply advanced the moment of this usual courtesy, and it was well they did. The last *entr'acte* indeed, having lasted for nearly half an hour, had put the people in a bad humor, and the long recitative of Tannhäuser coming on top of this, and lasting a quarter of an hour, completed the impatience of the audience. They had expected an honest melody, they had heard only a tedious recitative! Down with the donkey! This was the general outcry against a musician who, having at hand such a tenor as Tichatschek, could find nothing better for him to sing in the third act at the decisive moment for success, than an interminable recitative, and they immediately concluded that a musician capable of so grave a fault must be entirely devoid of melodious invention. Thus it was one of the most inspired pages, one of the grandest conceptions, which gave rise to that senseless criticism of weakness and want of melody, which has been re-echoed in every country during the past forty years!

The day after the performance, Wagner was above all crushed that the sweet illusion which he had cherished, of reaching the sympathies of the public without sacrificing his ideas of reform, had just suffered the rudest shock. "I was," said he, "overcome by this disappointment, and the isolation in which I found myself could not be concealed. The small number of friends who sympathized with me felt discouraged themselves, through a keen realization of my painful situation. A week slipped away before a second representation could be given, on account of the changes and the clippings which seemed necessary for a clearer understanding of the work. This week seemed to me like a life-time. It was not wounded pride which made me suffer; I was conscious of the absolute annihilation of all my illusions. I became aware that with *Tannhäuser* I had revealed myself to only a little group of my intimate friends, and not to the public, to which I involuntarily

addressed myself in the production of the work. It did not seem to me possible to reconcile this contradiction." Notwithstanding this apparent resignation, Wagner had clung to the solitary hope that the second representation would be a little better understood; finally, after eight days of anxious expectation, the requisite changes being made and Tichatschek having recovered from the hoarseness from which he had been suffering, they played *Tannhäuser* again, on the 27th of October; this performance so impatiently awaited, had the same result as the former one. The house was more than half empty, and the stray spectators who wandered in did not show themselves quicker of comprehension than those of the previous evening. However, thanks to the perseverance of the management, and particularly to the zeal and the talent of the actors, they lent a semblance of life to the work, and by the end of the year, in nine weeks, they had given seven representations.[1]

The journals with one accord, had declared *Tannhäuser* insupportable and tedious; it had neither melody nor form. And then, this sort of music acted upon the nerves, to say nothing of a subject by far too fatiguing and sorrowful. Art, said the critics, should be gay and consoling; why did not Tannhäuser marry Elizabeth? So the royal intendant explained to Wagner, that his predecessor, Weber, managed things much better, since he knew how to terminate his

[1] "This work excited the liveliest enthusiasm, wrote the *Gazette Musicale* of Paris; the author was recalled after every act, and after the performance, the musicians of the orchestra, and more than two hundred young men, each furnished with a torch, formed in procession and marched to his house, in order to execute under his window a serenade composed of selections chosen from his works and those of Meyerbeer." (Nov. 2nd.) But a month later it was obliged to recognize the fact that this success was only visionary; "This remarkable score has caused heated and serious discussions among the masses, as well as among men of art; but everybody agrees in pronouncing it a capital work, and one which does great honor to the composer." (7 December, 1845.)

operas happily. Finally, the dissatisfaction was general. *The Evening Gazette*, of Dresden, exalted by comparison a certain opera by Ferdinand Hiller, *Christmas Night's Dream*, represented at Dresden in April, 1845, and which, it said, contained much more music, in the true sense of the word. *The Norddeutcher Zeitung* playfully said: "If it is true that Wagner has unknown heights in view, heaven grant that he may never attain to them. These heights are crowned with an ennui so heavy that they are inaccessible." Finally the *New Musical Gazette*, of which Schumann had given up the management, made up for its former praises by attacking both the poem and the music, the obscurity and improbabilities of which it brought out in bold relief; Wagner knew by this that Schumann was no longer there.

The professional musicians were not more favorable than the press, to *Tannhäuser*. Mendelssohn, after hearing it, simply said to the author, "the canonical entry in the adagio of the second finale pleased me." Maurice Hauptmann who had replaced Weinlig at the Thomasschule, wrote to Spohr that the overture was quite atrocious, incredibly long, awkward and tedious. And Spohr, when he had had it played at Cassel in 1853, wrote to Hauptmann that this opera contained many new and beautiful ideas, but as many passages disagreeable to the ear; then in a following letter he announced himself quite accustomed by repeated hearings, to the things which formerly grated upon his ears, and that it was only the absence of definite rhythms and the frequent lack of rounded periods which continued to trouble him. Schumann, for he had come to live at Dresden in the autumn of 1844, wrote to Dorn on the 7th of January, 1846: "I wish that you might hear *Tannhäuser*. Some parts of it are most profound, most original, in short, a hundred times better than the preceding operas, and other parts are musically light. Wagner is able to take a very important place at the theatre, and I am sure

that he possesses the necessary courage. The technical means, for example the instrumentation, are quite remarkable, incomparably surer than formerly. He has already made a new libretto, *Lohengrin*." Schumann, at this period had almost entirely ceased to write long criticisms, but when a musical work struck him, whether favorably or unfavorably, immediately upon his return home, he rapidly noted down his impression on daily tablets: these brief mentions, covering the years 1847 to 1850, form a theatrical note-book. Now, one may read there under date of August 7th, 1847: "*Tannhäuser* by Richard Wagner. It is impossible to speak of this work in few words. That which is beyond all doubt is that it has the color of a work of genius. If Wagner had as much melody as cleverness, he would be the privileged man of his time. This opera would furnish material for many observations. It deserves that I keep this task for some future time." [1]

He never returned to it. And moreover his opinions shortly suffered a change on the subject of Richard Wagner, for he wrote in a letter of 1853, "Wagner is not, if I may say the thing in few words, a good musician; he lacks the necessary sentiment of form, and beauty of sound. Apart from the representation, his music is poor; it is the music of an ama-

[1] This encomium from the pen of Schumann has all the more weight, since, three months before he had very severely criticised the retouches which Wagner had given to *Iphigenie in Aulis*. He had heard Gluck's lyric tragedy thus arranged on the 15th of May, and this is what he wrote in his theatrical note-book after leaving the theatre: "It is Richard Wagner who had put the work on the stage; the costumes and decorations are worthy the interpreters. He has even added to the music, as I believe I have remarked elsewhere. I will say more: all the finale, "Nach Troja," is of his invention. This is too much. Perhaps Gluck would be justified in doing the same with one of Richard Wagner's operas, even to cutting it up and making radical changes in it. What would I say of the work in itself? As long as the world lasts, music like that will always shine resplendent, and will never grow old." These are very sensible criticisms, for which Richard Wagner never forgave Schumann.

TANNHAÜSER.

The Evening Star.—Act III.

teur, empty, and unpleasant." Spohr and Schumann changed opinions at the same time, but in the contrary direction.[1]

Wagner gave a good deal of thought and speculation to the causes of this repulse, and came to the conclusion that the artistic taste of the public, spoiled by worthless productions, must be entirely refashioned; moreover that any ordinary man would succeed but badly and that in order to undertake the work with any chance of success, one must have the protection of a power in the land, of a prince or a king. Just at that time there was a sovereign on the throne of Prussia deeply infatuated with the fine arts, with music in particular, very susceptible to new ideas, and very respectful to the masterpieces of the past, and who threw his capellmeisters into confusion by demanding of them off-hand, an execution of certain fragments from the old masters, forgotten by all, but not by him; it was the king Frederick William IV. Richard Wagner thought that a sovereign who had given to music such an honored place in his domain, who had called to Berlin, Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn, who had ordered of the latter the choruses to *Antigone* in order to restore antique tragedy, would bring some sympathy, or at least some curiosity to the examination of new musical ideas, and perhaps aid them to carry the day. Far, then, from giving up to the recent failure of *The Flying Dutchman*, it was in this direction that he turned all his efforts, addressing first the intendant of the royal theatre, then venturing even to the intendant of the court music. The account of the replies which he received from these two dignitaries, is best given in his own words:

[1] In February 1846, the overture to *Tannhäuser* was executed at Leipsic under the direction of Mendelssohn, "who conducted it," said M. Glasenapp in his work written on the inspiration of Wagner, "with the moderate sympathy which he always felt for the efforts of Wagner. If it is true that he has had the intention of showing this overture there as a model to avoid, one may rest assured he has succeeded." The compliment is worth the price.

"I made some attempts to have my opera introduced, aiming especially at the Berlin theatre; but I received a formal refusal from the intendant of the royal theatres of Prussia. The intendant general of the court music seemed better disposed towards it; through him I begged that the king would interest himself in the execution of my work, and asked permission to dedicate to him the score of *Tannhäuser*. He made official response that the king never accepted the dedication of a work without hearing it; but that considering the obstacles which prevented the execution of my opera at the Berlin theatre, it might be possible to have it heard by the king if I would arrange some pieces for military music which would be played on parade. I could not have been more painfully humiliated, nor have recognized with more certainty my true position. Henceforth there was no more fame in art for me."

This is well enough to say afterwards; but is an artist who is truly convinced of his worth and of the power of a new idea, ever disarmed before the public? Such a weakness is only excusable in composers without conviction, and without conscience, and heaven knows there are enough of them in the world! Instead of lamenting at his failure, Wagner while projecting a new work in which he could develop his creative and inventive faculties (*Lohengrin*) also occupied himself with retouching and improving *Tannhäuser*. In its first form *Tannhäuser* differed in two important points from the work which was heard at Paris in 1861. In the first place, the opening scene of the Court of Venus, so indifferently rendered by Mme. Schroeder, was far from being the richly developed scene which Wagner afterwards made it, expressly for the Parisian public; furthermore, the conclusion of the work was much shorter; one saw neither Venus nor the funeral procession of Elizabeth. Tannhäuser remained alone on the stage with Wolfram, and the struggle between the voluptuous pagan and the virtuous Christian who disputed for his heart, was

indicated only by the distant light in the grotto of Venus, and the funeral knells tolled by the bells of Wartburg; Wagner modified and developed this final scene in the second revision of his opera, finished in September 1846, but before the completion of this recasting, he had experienced a double pleasure. First, having gone to Cassel, he had encountered there the aged Spohr, whom the reading of *Tannhäuser* had confirmed in the high opinion which he had formed of Wagner's talent, after the representation of *The Flying Dutchman*. Then a revival of the work effected at Dresden in 1847, with the conclusion leisurely developed, had been more and more favorably received by the amateurs. The press was not disarmed, and still held that the work was as bad as ever; but the public itself showed such a general interest, that Wagner persuaded himself that except for the criticisms, he could easily secure the adoption of his new point of view and his most individual creations, by all sincere and unprejudiced people.

Humiliated as Wagner had been by the proposition made to him at Berlin to judge his *Tannhäuser* in the form of parade music, he had nevertheless, being pressed for money, renewed his solicitations, with the aid of Meyerbeer, and the king of Prussia finally designated *Rienzi* for the holiday representation to be given on the anniversary of his birthday, Oct. 15, 1847. The author went to Berlin in September, in order to direct the studies; he received a rather lukewarm welcome, and the journals immediately came out with ill-natured remarks and personal attacks which augured ill for the final result. At the theatre he was satisfied with the zeal of the orchestra and with the talent of the singers — Pfister as Rienzi, Mlle. Tuszek as Irène, and Mme. Schlegel-Koester as Adriano — but he could not succeed in conciliating the press. Furthermore he was not happy in his discourse, and in speaking of the grave of Weber had made some unfortunate re-

marks. At the general rehearsal, while undertaking to thank the *personnel* and particularly the orchestra, he so far forgot himself as to say that *Rienzi* was the work of a beginner, the tendency of which he repudiated, and that one ought not to judge of his actual ideal by this totally insufficient production, which he himself declared to be a "transgression of youth." The performance, delayed by an indisposition of Mlle. Tuszek did not take place until the 26th.[1]

Meyerbeer had departed a few days previously, and the king, although he had designated the opera, had not deigned to be present. However the house was filled, notwithstanding the doubts and preconceived notions of the press. The overture, it is true, was received coldly enough, but the composer, who directed the execution, was recalled after the second act, and again at the end of the play. There was probably more civility than real enthusiasm in these recalls, and on the following day, the journals did their worst for the work, summoning to their support the author's own confession, and reproaching him for his noisy orchestration, his lack of melody, of form, etc. And this was the fate of *Rienzi* in Berlin because the author had not known how to curb his tongue. An unhappy speech had caused all the trouble, and more than once in the course of Wagner's career, the orator in the man has compromised the musician.

From *The Flying Dutchman* to *Tannhäuser* there was a very perceptible progress, in the sense that Wagner disengaged himself more and more from the forms of conventional opera, such as Gluck and Weber, to his mind the greatest masters, had treated it. Certainly Gluck and Weber, as well

[1] Was this the true and only reason? It has been said that the management had found in *Rienzi* certain dangerous political expressions, — liberty, fraternity, etc., which would have to be emphasized at the representation, and that they had preferred to give another opera on the king's birthday, postponing *Rienzi* till the end of the month.

as Beethoven, have greatly aided the development of Wagner's genius; but let us exaggerate nothing especially in regard to the first named, and not go so far as to say that Richard Wagner has imagined nothing which Gluck has not done or indicated before him. It would be impossible to make a claim of this kind after seeing the scores of these two composers side by side, for they are as different as night is from day. Gluck has not modified in any way the general form of the opera; the air exists as the essential element, and the airs, duets, trios, choruses and *divertissements* follow each other in the simplest possible manner; moreover he often had in view the pure vocal effect, when he would repeat words without constraint, and troubled himself so little about the unity of conception between the poetry and the music, that he very often reset old Italian airs to French words, without the slightest scruple; indeed, it was only by the power and vigor of his declamation that Gluck has acted upon Wagner.

As to Weber, Wagner himself has explained, with the respect which he had for his chosen master, in what particulars they differed from each other. "There is no denying it, the discouraging effect proceeding from a knowledge of the true character of the opera-going public, is of paramount importance, and with an artist of a feeble nature always ends by becoming the principal consideration. They tell me that Weber himself, this pure, this noble, this profound spirit, fell back affrighted time and time again, before the consequences of his method so full of originality; he conferred upon his wife the right of "the gallery" as he expresses it; he undertook to make through her, in the sense of "this gallery," all the possible objections to his ideas, and they often resulted in his making expedient concessions, in spite of the requirements of the style. These concessions which my first model, my venerated master Weber, believed himself obliged to make to the opera public, I flatter myself you will never encounter in

my *Tannhäuser*, and that which is peculiar to the form of this work, that which distinguishes it perhaps more than anything else from those of my predecessors, consists precisely in that."

In drawing upon this German legend for the subject of his drama, Wagner had remained faithful to his preferences for the myth, since the heart of his naïve and pious legend expresses the struggle of the sensual love personified by Venus, and the ideal love represented by the chaste Elizabeth. A knight of Thuringen, Tannhäuser, has allowed himself to wander into the subterranean empire of the pagan divinity, the Court of Venus. The goddess intoxicates him with pleasures and employs a thousand seductions for detaining him; but Tannhäuser has felt awaken in him the memory of his youth; remorse has seized him. He resists the further supplications of Venus, who predicts that he will sooner or later return to her and disappears. Tannhäuser finds himself transported to the earth, in a pleasant valley; one hears in the distance the song of the pilgrims, who are on their way to Rome to implore of the Holy Father pardon for their faults. Some huntsmen arrive on the scene, who recognize Tannhäuser; these are his friends, the chevalier-poets, with the landgrave of Thuringen. They question him, they demand of him why he has quitted his brothers, and whence he has come; Tannhäuser vaguely responds that he has committed a great fault, and that he must expiate it by fleeing from all whom he loves. "Forgettest thou, then Elizabeth," his friend Wolfram murmurs in his ear, "Elizabeth, the niece of the landgrave, who since thy departure has lost all the graces, all the sprightliness of youth?" At this cherished name, which recalls to him a happy past, Tannhäuser yields, and returns with his friends to the court of the landgrave. — Behold the great hall of Wartburg. Tannhäuser conducted by Wolfram, there meets Elizabeth, who at the approach of the new festival, calls to mind the tourneys of the past, from which Tannhäuser always

went forth conqueror; recognition and reconciliation quickly enter the hearts of the two lovers. Then commences the fête of the singers. In the presence of the high lords and grand ladies of Thuringen the landgrave opens the *concours*, and announces that Elizabeth will reward the poet who shall the best "penetrate the mystery of pure love." Wolfram of Eschenbach enters first on the list, and sings of ideal love. But Tannhäuser, who is still under the domination of Venus, challenges these sentiments, and celebrates a passion less mystic. Walther arises and replies to Tannhäuser; then the latter, enflamed by the recollection of Venusberg, again takes up his song with increased enthusiasm. The assembly rise up indignant, the women depart, the knights draw their swords and fall upon the audacious singer. Elizabeth alone defends him against them all. She finally obtains assurance that his life shall be spared, and gives herself up to the love of him who is no longer worthy of it. The landgrave drives out the offender, and persuades him to join the pilgrims, whose last faint accents are heard in the valley. "To Rome!" cries Tannhäuser, suddenly shaking off his hallucination and measuring at a glance the abyss of evil into which the power of Venus had thrown him. At the opening of the third act, Elizabeth is seen kneeling at the feet of the Virgin; she fervently implores the salvation of Tannhäuser. The pilgrims return from Rome, and Tannhäuser is not with them; the young girl then slowly retires. Tannhäuser at last arrives, pale, spent with fatigue, and crushed beneath a weight of remorse. He meets Wolfram and describes to him his pilgrimage, in terms of despair; the Pope has not heard his prayer. "Where goest thou?" "To Venusberg." Then appears Venus, who desires to win back the pilgrim; but Wolfram restrains him, and shows him the body of Elizabeth, who has just given herself up to death. Christianity triumphs over paganism, and Tannhäuser expires by the side of the pure victim, crying "Saint Elizabeth, pray for me!"

This drama, in its grand simplicity, offers a number of tableaux favorable to the inspiration of the musician; moreover, being elevating in its nature, superhuman, almost mystic, it exalts the soul, instead of bringing the mind down to the level of purely terrestrial incidents. In regard to the music, is there anything more beautiful than this overture, in which the violent struggle between the two elements of the drama is so vividly depicted, or than the tableau of Venusberg as it was rearranged for Paris? And all that which follows; the sweet song of the shepherd, with the chorus of the departing pilgrims, then the grand septet of the chevaliers; is not this admirable act all that could be desired? The second act is fairly inferior to the other two. The *entrée* of Elizabeth and the first part of her duet with Tannhäuser are indeed remarkable, but the allegro which follows is by far too commonplace. There are some superb passages in the tourney of the poets, such as the chant of the orchestra at the moment when the pages are seating the lords, or the appeal of Elizabeth as she throws herself before the drawn swords, or yet the conclusion, with the chorus of pilgrims in the distance; but the scene of the *concours* in its *ensemble* is monotonous, and the author does not seem to have realized in it that fusion of the music with the words, which was to become in his eyes the essential condition of musical beauty. The spirit of it is powerful but uniform, and therein the character is faulty, since all the interest should proceed from the contrast and the opposition of the different songs of love improvised by the *trouvères*. The third act, on the other hand, is from beginning to end a conception of genius, a creation so superior that the author has never since been able to surpass it.

Just as it stands, and notwithstanding the imperfections of the second act, *Tannhäuser* clearly shows the tendency of the author, and already gives a forecast of the future mould of opera. Although the forms of the *genre* persist there in

many places, particularly in the finale of the first act, and in the duet between Elizabeth and Tannhäuser, Wagner could flatter himself that he had produced a work three quarters individual, and that he had made, victorious or not with the public, a great step in advance of his master Weber, of that Weber who himself also had aspired to the drama, at least in *Euryanthe*, and who in his predilection for the old popular legends, had predicted that it would be possible one day to create a distinctively German opera. It has been said with reason, that Wagner in this last opera, commenced just where Weber left off.

RICHARD WAGNER'S HOME AT BAYREUTH.

CHAPTER VI

LOHENGRIN AT WEIMAR

IT was during a summer holiday that he spent at Marienbad, in 1845, — perhaps two or three months before the appearance of *Tannhäuser* — that Richard Wagner outlined the plan of *Lohengrin*. He was very glad to have finished with *Tannhäuser;* he expected an early success, and for the first time in many months, he gave rein to his natural high spirits, and turned for a time to the study of more cheerful ideas. His friends had been advising him to treat a subject less painful, which would more easily please the public, and as his mind was still full of *Tannhäuser*, it occurred to him that it would be a good idea to make a comic counterpart to that opera, by bringing the corporation of the Meistersingers of Nuremberg before the footlights, and setting off this pedantic *concours* of *bourgeois* against the poetical tourney of the noble *Minnesinger*. And as he was always disposed to identify himself with his heroes he would have taken great satisfaction in becoming incarnate in Hans Sachs, the last representative of popular poetry, or in the chevalier Walther, the inspired poet of love ; whilst those narrow-minded pedants would have represented the musicians whose insipid productions impeded his progress, and the senseless critics who passed upon him from the height of their ignorance. So he made a preliminary sketch of the *Meistersingers*, but

whether the subject were really too gay for his actual state of mind, or whether he had not yet enough irony to cast upon his detractors, he soon abandoned it, and returned to *Lohengrin*.

He had known for a long time the legend of the "Knight of the Swan"; he had read it in Paris, at the same time that he had read *Tannhäuser*, and he had not found it much to his taste; he classed it with the superficial order, — he of the romantico-Christian poems; but when he came to examine it more closely, at the moment of abandoning the *Meistersingers*, he recognized in *Lohengrin* a myth antedating Christianity and the starting-point of which was not in the supernatural, but in woman's heart itself; henceforth he became as much in love with the subject as he had formerly disliked it. As he himself says, the very feeling of his complete isolation before a rebellious public, — since the aid which he had thought to find near an intelligent sovereign had just come to naught — gave him the courage to undertake a new work, in which he should press still further forward, and should depart more and more from the current form of opera. This indicated on his part a very strange turn of mind, but also a rare tenacity, and a particular inclination to reflect in his heroes the impressions of his own heart. When he had composed *The Flying Dutchman*, he was himself longing after the ideal woman, the distant fatherland, sovereign healers of all woes; just as the Hollander tossed upon the boundless deep, longed after the woman who was to deliver him from eternal damnation. In writing *Tannhäuser* he had symbolized the struggle which had just arisen in his own heart, and in which he had set out to conquer, like his hero, by sacrificing the pleasures of the world to the sweet delights of a satisfied conscience and of a pure ideal. In *Lohengrin* he was going to rise still higher into the ethereal regions, towards the radiant summits, always like his heroes,

while the whole world, the public, the press and his friends were doing their best to make him descend again to their level. "In truth," says he, "*Lohengrin* is an entirely new manifestation. It was possible at no other time, and under no other conditions than in the mind and intuition of an artist, who, finding himself precisely in my position, had arrived at the point of development at which I had arrived when this subject appeared to me as an imperative duty which was imposed upon me."[1]

In other words he composed *Lohengrin* and arose forthwith to the absolute masterpiece; absolute, according to the ideas which he had at the time, because he was irresistibly driven to it by a mysterious force, in spite of attacks or remonstrances, and he could not do otherwise than obey this inner impulse.

Wagner arranged the situations and composed the principal musical motives of his drama during the winter of 1845, immediately after the failure of *Tannhäuser;* so that he was able to commence the music in the month of September, 1846, while he was *en villegiature* at Grosgraufen, near the royal residence of Pilnitz. Just as in *The Flying Dutchman* he had instinctively commenced with the ballad of Senta, which became the musical pivot of the score, so in *Lohengrin*, and this time with a deliberate purpose, he began with the third act, and composed first the recitative of the Holy Grail, on which he wished to build the entire work. In the meantime *Tannhäuser* was again performed, and as it succeeded this time a little better, he felt renewed courage to work. He was so thoroughly absorbed in the composition of *Lohengrin*, that he meditated isolating himself from the world, in order to obtain the necessary concentration of thought; so during the summer of 1847 he managed to gain absolute solitude in

[1] *Richard Wagner d'après lui-même*, by M. Georges Noufflard, p. 215.

the old *palais Marcolini*, with the result that he was able to finish the introduction by the 28th of August; by the end of the following spring, all the instrumentation was completed. Surely, it was something to have finished the score; but he was anxious to have it seen, to have it performed. Now neither the editor Meser, who had published without profit his first three operas, nor the royal intendant who had mounted them, seemed disposed to incur further expense. A story went the rounds that the unfortunate Meser, who lodged on the first floor before the publication of *Rienzi*, and had been obliged to mount an additional flight of stairs after each new opera, had nothing left but to install himself in the garret, if he wished to publish *Lohengrin;* it was also declared that at the approach of the masterpiece, the price of violin strings was considerably increased; harmless pleasantries, which ran their course at Dresden, and even reached so far as the journals of Vienna. After some hesitation the royal intendant consented, but not the publisher, to whom Wagner was already considerably in debt through former transactions; and it was the house of Breitkopf and Härtel, who, for a few hundred thalers, finally acquired the ownership of *Lohengrin.*

Meanwhile Wagner had still other projects in mind; he hesitated between a *Siegfried*, a purely mythical subject, and a *Frederic Barbarossa*,[1] a subject wholly historical; again his mind was disturbed by a conflict between history and legend.

At first he favored Barbarossa, intending to make a prose drama of it, without music, but he soon found that in order to place the grand figure of Barbarossa in his own time, with the proper surroundings, he must bring together so many im-

[1] From the historical studies made with a view to *Barbarossa*, there resulted only a curious essay, *Die Wibelungen*, a history of the world according to tradition, originally intended for a drama in prose, and treating upon the points of contact between history and myth; it was written in 1848, and published at Leipsic in 1850.

portant facts, that there would be no room left for the drama, properly speaking; whereas, if he attempted to treat the subject literally, making use of mythical processes, he would completely destroy the history, and take away the real character of his hero. He concluded then that in order to employ the mythical form in the most perfect manner, he must reject all compromise, and select a veritable myth. Once convinced of the double idea that the ideal drama *ought not to be historical*, and that it *ought to be musical*, he abandoned all thought of Frederic Barbarossa, and in the autumn of 1848, he wrote the poem of *The Death of Siegfried*. He wrote it in alliterative verse, for he had his own ideas upon language, and had constructed for himself quite a system of versification, holding that alliteration is nothing less than the generative force of language, and that music with its aid, attains to an infinite richness and variety; he claimed also that it would have been his duty to renounce his *Siegfried*, if he had been unable to couch it in other verse than that in common use. He found in alliteration, strongly accenting the rhythm, a very *melody of language* whence sprung directly the equivalent musical melody, etc., and this is what he tried to realize in *The Death of Siegfried;* but without the desired result, for the same thing is true of the alliteration as of the rhyme, namely, that the verses are much weakened when set to music, as one may be convinced by listening to the *Nibelungen*.

In 1848 Richard Wagner obtained at Dresden a hearing of the finale of *Lohengrin*, at a concert given on September 22, on the occasion of the third centennial of the founding of the chapel royal. At the close of the festival there was the customary banquet, and Wagner made a short speech in which he expressed the sentiment so often repeated since then, that the theatre had a duty to perform: to encourage exclusively the national artistic production; that it had an object to attain: to assist in the education and enlightenment of the people for

and by the German fatherland. Thus all proceeded regularly, and after the public hearing of this important page, *Lohengrin* would have been played at Dresden, like *Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*, if the author had not taken part in a grand political disturbance. It must be said that Richard Wagner, perhaps under the influence of the subversive theories which he had absorbed in the Universities, but also because of his natural propensities to reform everything, was much carried away with revolutionary notions. Not that he had settled, deeply-rooted convictions, but because he was miserably poor, over head and ears in debt, and hunted by his creditors; therefore he awaited a political change to bring about a sudden amelioration of his own condition, or the immediate realization of his more or less chimerical projects. He had already given many of these projects to the public; he had written a paper on the reorganization of the theatre at Dresden, and of the Conservatory at Leipsic, which latter he proposed to transport without ceremony to Dresden. The irritation which the people of Leipsic felt at such a proposition as this can be easily imagined. A little later, immediately following the troubles produced in Germany by the reaction from the Revolution of 1848 in France, when a ministry of the opposition had replaced the Koenneritz ministry in Saxony, he had addressed to the new minister of the interior, Martin Oberläuder, with whom he sympathized, a long project for the reorganization of the theatre; he requested that the budget of the opera should be separated from that of the court, and that the subsidy, which had hitherto been given out of the king's private purse, should be replaced by an annual appropriation made from the public treasury. His aim was to centralize all the institutions of art existing in Saxony, with headquarters at Dresden. He wished to put the theatre in a state to guide the public taste instead of following it, and in order to give it a purely intellectual character, he proposed to trans-

form it into a sort of artistic republic, subject to a representative government; finally to make of this ideal theatre a kind of annex to the church, and to connect it with the ministry of public worship.

But nothing came of all these fine propositions; they were not even examined, and Wagner, irritated at the small amount of attention which his labors excited, turned more than ever towards the revolutionary party. He consorted with several of his leaders, with Semper, director of the school of architecture; with Kichly, the philologist; with Roeckel, director of a new democratic journal; he joined secret societies, and went away to deliver a grand discourse at the *Dresdener Vaterlandsverein*, with the object of giving the projected revolution more of an artistic and less of a political character; for which he was regarded by the leaders of the party as a visionary and shallow-pated artist. For his part, he did not judge them much more favorably, and allowed them to see it; but he had none the less received a reprimand for his conduct from the authorities, who judged that a royal capellmeister had something better to do than to go about haranguing at the clubs. At this moment of his life, isolated in a society which could not understand him, he had conceived the idea of depicting his own voluntary annihilation in a drama of *Jesus of Nazareth*, in which Jesus would not have been a God descended upon earth to die, but a man capable of enjoying life, and whom the unworthiness of this world had so disgusted, that he sought death as a deliverance. He did not carry out this idea for a poem, because, as he says, a drama of that nature would have been forbidden by law, since society would not have submitted to so radical a change.

Notwithstanding his difficult position, notwithstanding the ideas of social and musical reformation, with the theatre for the base, and universal happiness for the goal, which agitated his mind, he probably would not have gone any farther, had

REPRESENTATION OF "LOHENGRIN," AT WEIMAR, IN 1850.

(Act I: Arrival of Lohengrin).—After an engraving of the time.

not the Russian revolutionary Bakounine arrived in the country, which was then in a state of fermentation. The latter immediately gained a great influence over Wagner, and led him up to such a degree of exaltation, that one day the ambitious musician, — I have the fact from a good source — addressed a letter to the King, counselling him to proclaim the Republic himself, and to become thus the first citizen of that free State. Finally, on the 1st of May, 1849, when the King pronounced the dissolution of the Saxon diet, and the Socialist party called the people to arms, Wagner did not hesitate to seize a gun and run to the barricades; again the influence of Bakounine. At first the insurgents had the upper hand; the arsenal was taken and burned, the regular army defeated, and the king left the city; but thirty-six hours later the Prussian troops arrived, who promptly restored order, and Richard Wagner, together with Semper and many others took to flight; Bakounine was arrested.

Once outside of Saxony, Wagner went undisturbed to Weimar, to ask protection from Liszt, with whom, forgetting his first impression at Paris, he had formed a strong friendship when the latter had come to Dresden to give concerts; a marked similarity of tastes and of temperament had brought them together forever. Liszt having retreated to the court of Saxe-Weimar, had testified to his devotion to Wagner by executing first the overture to *Tannhäuser* (Nov. 12, 1848), then the entire opera, on Feb. 16, 1849, for the fête of the reigning grand-duchess; and, as he boasts with good reason, in a letter addressed to the *Journal des Débats*, of Paris, this little capital, always hospitable to good and great things, had made the reputation of this work for all of Germany. The success had been decisive, and Wagner had received confirmation of it at Dresden, in the classic form of a gold snuffbox. Received by Liszt with open arms, the fugitive would willingly have prolonged his stay at Weimar, had he not suddenly

learned, on the 19th of May, during a rehearsal of *Tannhäuser*, that orders had gone forth from Dresden to arrest, in any part of the German Confederation an "individual politically dangerous," by the name of Richard Wagner. At the same time the *Wochenblatt* of Frankfort, published his discription: "Wagner, thirty-seven or thirty-eight years of age, of medium height, brown hair, high forehead, brown eyebrows, gray-blue eyes, well proportioned nose and mouth, round chin, wears glasses. Words and gestures rapid. Clothing, redingote of dark green buckskin, black pantaloons, velvet waistcoat, silk cravat, the usual felt hat and boots." There was no time to be lost; Liszt succeeded in procuring for him a passport and escorted him as far as Eisenach on the way to Paris.

In departing thus, Wagner knew that he left behind him a friend who would watch over his work, and propagate it. "One day," he has related, "when I was sick, miserable and discouraged, my eyes fell upon the score of *Lohengrin* which I had nearly forgotten. I experienced a painful shock in the feeling that these notes would never be heard, would be dead while yet living, and I wrote a few words to Liszt. He replied by assuring me that notwithstanding the limited resources of Weimar, he would make the greatest efforts to have my work performed there." And Liszt kept his word. At that time preparations were being made at Weimar for grand festivals for the inauguration of the statue of Herder on the 25th of August, his birthday, and also on the 28th of August, Goethe's birthday, the centennial of which had been celebrated in the preceding year with a religious respect. When they came to discuss the program for these two days, as it was necessary to select something with grand scenic effects, it was decided to execute on the 25th the *Chained Prometheus* by Herder, of which Liszt would write the music, and on the 28th, to represent for the first time the last opera of Richard Wagner.

Liszt, aided by the leader of the orchestra, Genast, immediately set about preparing the execution of *Lohengrin*, according to the minute instructions sent him by his friend; only three days before the representation Wagner sent still further explanations about the minor details of the play. It was a great happiness for him to know that his work was going to be executed without a single suppression, but how short a time this happiness was to endure! The very day after the first performance, he received the most pressing requests from Liszt and Genast, to authorize them to cut out certain portions of the work. Wagner replied by a letter to Genast, in which, notwithstanding the pleasure which so devoted a collaboration gave him, he showed a sorrowful resignation, and remained convinced that they would not be able to add to the public interest by making these mutilations; however he left his friends to act according to their discretion, only insisting, that if a similar case should arise in the future, they should not consult him about it. And twenty years later *apropos* of the representation of the *Meistersingers* at Berlin, he uttered the same sentiments in these words. "This time I am quite powerless, as usual, but if this wrong is to be done, I desire to know nothing of it." Liszt and Genast made use of the permission with moderation, but they did make use of it, and thence arose all the injury which is deplored by the intimate friends of the master; the tradition of these rejected portions is preserved, and even in the heart of Germany to-day, *Lohengrin* is still executed with certain suppressions tolerated, if not actually consented to, by the author.

This musical festival at which Liszt presided, had attracted a large number of people to Weimar; the foreign press eagerly responded to the invitation of the celebrated artist, and exhibited a strong desire to judge the work which he patronized so warmly. The first representation was given on

the day appointed, the 28th of August, 1850; if not a triumph, at least the work so remarkably sustained by Mmes. Agthe and Faiztlinger (Elsa and Ortrude), by MM. Beck, Milde and Hoefer (Lohengrin, Frederick and the King), was very favorably received. Among the journalists present at Weimar, was a French writer of note, who had received an invitation probably by reason of his having made the first French translation of Goethe's *Faust;* it was Gérard de Nerval. In describing these ceremonies in *La Presse*, Gérard was obliged to say at least a few words about *Lohengrin*, and this brief judgment, cautious, and feebly sanctioned though it was, has its importance, for it was probably the first echo which resounded in France of the success of Richard Wagner. "They also gave on that day, for the first time, *Lohengrin* by Wagner. The music of this opera is very remarkable, and the more it is heard, the more it will be appreciated. It is a bold and original talent which has revealed itself to Germany, and which has as yet said only its first words. M. Wagner has been reproached for having given too much importance to the instruments, and having, as Grétry said, put the pedestal on the stage and the statue in the orchestra; but he has undoubtedly kept to the character of his poem, which stamps the work with the form of a lyric drama, rather than that of an opera. The artists have valiantly executed this difficult score, which, to give a summary idea of it, seems to resemble the musical tradition of Gluck and Spontini. After *Rienzi*, and before *Lohengrin*, Wagner had already given *Tannhäuser*, which obtained a marked success at Dresden and afterwards at Weimar. The last opera has appeared a less happy attempt, from the idea which it pursues of an intimate alliance between the poetry and the music."

And all this time Wagner, detained at Zurich, anxiously awaited tidings of *Lohengrin*. One of his pupils, Carl Ritter —for he had undertaken to give lessons in composition — had

gone to Weimar in order to report to him the most precise information upon the effect produced, and Wagner did not weary of questioning him, in order to try to figure to himself what his work had become in taking form upon the stage. In any case, this single opera, played in the little town of Weimar in his absence, had done more for him than all his preceding operas, given in the great city of Dresden; it was the dawning of his celebrity. Even those who had not understood very much of *Lohengrin*, could not speak of it calmly and dispassionately; it was the subject of much discussion. But the disturbance excited by his preceding works, and which another opera sufficed to revive, had not yet extended beyond the German states. "The musicians," said he himself at that time, "have no objection to my dabbling in poetry, and the poets are not reluctant to admit my musical talent; frequently I have been able to stir the public; as for criticism, it has always disparaged me." All over the rest of Europe he was absolutely unknown,[1] while *Lohengrin* was making a tour of Germany, and ten long years were passing, during which the author was not permitted the happiness of hearing the work; "You will see," said he to his friends, "that I will soon be the only German who has not heard *Lohengrin*."

Although clearly issued from the same stock as *Tannhäuser*, and coming only two years after it, *Lohengrin* is a work more ripe and complete than the preceding one.[2] It is the

[1] On the 24th of November, 1850, perhaps reflecting the Weimar festivals, Seghers inaugurated at Paris his famous Saint Cecilia concerts, giving the overture of *Tannhäuser*, which passed quite unnoticed, so completely ignorant were they of the author.

[2] Wagner felt that with *Lohengrin* he had made a long step in advance of *Tannhäuser*, and that he was departing still more from the taste of the times, for it was Donizetti above all others, who reigned at Dresden at the time of the composition of *Lohengrin*; but he did not exaggerate his merit, and modestly said in a letter written in 1847: "I am disposed rather to doubt my talents than to overrate them, and to consider my present enterprise (*Lohengrin*) as a substantial

RICHARD WAGNER, IN 1853.
After a Portrait, by Clementine Stocker-Escher.
Lithographed by Fr. Hanfstœngl.

highest, fullest and best expression of what one might call the second style of Wagner. Whereas *Tannhäuser* is still allied to *The Flying Dutchman*, and, by occasional passages, to the tradition of the school, to the French opera imitated by Wagner in *Rienzi*, *Lohengrin* is a decided departure from these, while at the same time it affords a glimpse of the powerful evolution of ideas which was to culminate in *Tristan and Isolde*. The poem of *Lohengrin* is pure legend, with no suggestion of history, and the mystic fancies which guide the characters, the motives which they obey, would be quite insufficient for the building of an opera libretto after the fashion of *La Muette* or of *Robert*; but they introduce tender or dramatic episodes, than which a composer could not desire anything more beautiful. It has been said, and Wagner himself admits it, that there exist some striking analogies between the two poems of *Euryanthe* and *Lohengrin*, which borrow from different legends, characters and situations somewhat similar. The Count of Telramund and Ortrude, are they not actuated by the same passions as Lysiart and Eglantine? Elsa and Lohengrin, do they not find themselves placed in the same poetic and chivalrous situations as Euryanthe and Adolar? and finally, the German King Heinrich of Brabant, and the unnamed King of France, do they not both play the role of judge and mediator? It is from the famous epic poem of *Parsifal and Titurel*, the author of which is Wolfram of Eschenbach, one of the most celebrated Minnesingers of the latter part of the XII. Century, that the legend of *Lohengrin* is taken; and it was at one of these tourneys of singers given at the Wartburg, like that of *Tannhäuser*, that Wolfram sung for the first time the poem of *Lohengrin*, at the request of the landgrave of Thuringen, of

response to the question, Is the Opera possible?" and the most curious thing about it is that he spoke truly, since a short time after, he cherished the idea of writing a *Barbarossa* without music; strange illusion of a universal mind.

the ladies present, and even of his enemy, the magician Klingsor, "who was endeavoring to win him over to the evil one, by exciting his envy and pride through a science superior to his." But Wolfram, sustained by the Virgin, whom he faithfully served, went forth conqueror from this struggle with the evil spirit.

Lohengrin, Knight of the Swan, is the son of Parsifal, to whom has been confided the keeping of the Holy Grail, upon Mount Salvat: now, the pious knights, charged with this holy office, are permitted to remain upon the earth only so long as they shall suffer nothing to force them to reveal their divine mission and the origin of their invincible power. It is thus that Lohengrin descends from regions unapproachable, in order to defend Elsa, accused by the ambitious Frederick of Telramund, and his malicious wife, Ortrude, of having killed her young brother, heir of Brabant; but before drawing his sword for Elsa, Lohengrin makes her swear that she will never seek to know who he is. Elsa consenting to this condition, Lohengrin crosses swords with Frederick, and throws him down, but spares him his life. All the lords of Brabant then salute him for their chief in the expedition which the emperor of Germany is preparing against the Hungarians. Frederick, dishonored, dispossessed of his estates, feels the cause to be lost, but Ortrude introduces herself as a suppliant to the generous Elsa; she insinuates herself into her confidence, and throws into that candid heart the first germs of doubt and of curiosity on the subject of her mysterious lover. Elsa resists all her suggestions, but at the very moment of her triumphal entry into the church, Frederick calls upon his conqueror to make himself known before the whole court, and Elsa already endures with increasing impatience the disdainful silence of her defender. Scarcely are they left alone in the nuptial chamber, than she presses Lohengrin with questions in order to wrest from him this secret which she is burning to know;

in vain does he recall to her, her solemn vow; Elsa, whose mind works itself up at each new refusal, believes that her husband is about to escape her, that the white swan is returning to take her beloved away from her. At the moment when this trouble of mind attains its paroxysm, Frederick, who is concealed by Elsa in an adjoining room, advances to attack Lohengrin, but the latter turns upon his adversary and kills him; then, seeing that his happiness has vanished forever, he directs that Elsa be clothed in white, and conducted to the tribunal of the king. There, before the whole court assembled, he discloses his origin and his mission; he explains the sovereign order which obliges him to depart, but before returning to Mount Salvat, he gives back the young Godfrey to his sister Elsa, for the white swan who had brought Lohengrin was no other than the young prince transformed into a swan by the sorcery of Ortrude. Lohengrin disappears forever, and Elsa falls lifeless upon the shore.

Reading only the principal lines of this poem, known to-day throughout the entire world, is one not struck with the great number of situations of a rare dramatic power which it contains, and does one not recognize that it is, indeed, the antique fable of Psyche, transported to the middle ages, and engrafted upon the religious legends of an epoch of fervor and of faith? That which impresses one at once in reading the score of *Lohengrin*, but which is much more striking in the representation, is the absolutely new form in which it is conceived, and which is in every particular consistent with the strictest truth. Each act forms in itself a grand symphonic whole, of which the delineations by the orchestra vary infinitely, according to the expression of the scenes, or the sentiment of the personages, but without a break anywhere. Above this orchestral woof, in this sonorous atmosphere which doubles the power of the voice, and the melodious expression of the phrases sung, each personage declaims exactly that which he ought to say, never

more or less, in a recitative very melodious and elevated, but without repeating himself and very rarely singing with another; for it is equally contrary to truth that two people should talk at once, as Grimm and Rousseau have long since remarked, or that an individual should repeat the same refrain many times, as in a vocal exercise. Besides, Wagner substituted in a remarkable manner for these inexplicable and inexpressive repetitions, characteristic phrases which determined not only a personage, but a situation, an entire scene, even the state of the mind at a given moment, and which he made reappear or combined together with an incredible facility. This entirely new musical form must cause an intense surprise to even the best prepared hearer, and one would hardly know how to express the effect produced, taking our ordinary operas as a point of comparison; but for all that it seems impossible that any unprejudiced mind should not be struck with admiration before a work in which elements so different are handled with such force of will, such a power of inspiration. To many people, slower to comprehend, or to be moved, the admiration will be longer in coming, but it will surely come, and will be all the more profound and enduring.

"It is impossible" said Liszt in a pamphlet written a short time after the representation of *Lohengrin*, "to justly appreciate this work, if one attempts to search through it for the ancient composition of opera, the customary division of the singing parts, the accepted distribution of the airs, romances, *soli* and *tutti*, in a word the whole economy adopted for the purpose of making the most of the singers and the melodies, in a proportion often arbitrary in favor of the first. Wagner solemnly abjured everything adopted out of consideration for the habitual exigencies of *prima donna assoluta*, or of *basso cantante*. In his eyes there are no singers, there are only roles; so that he finds it perfectly simple to preserve complete silence on the part of a *prima donna* throughout an entire act,

when her presence, actually necessary to the probability of the scene, must be indicated by mere dumb show, certainly as despised as it is inexecutable by any Italian *diva*.[1]"

Ortrude indeed, has nothing to say throughout the whole of the first act of *Lohengrin*; she sings a little in the finale only, and yet, if the actress charged with this rôle possess a true dramatic instinct, she will know how to produce the most beautiful effects from these silent scenes.

If it is difficult to explain the technical form, the intrinsic merit and the radiant power of this music to one who has never heard it, it is quite as difficult to cite one *piece* as separate and distinct from the rest; for, properly speaking, there are no pieces, and one would not know how to detach any portion whatever from the complete and concise unit which these operas form, as far removed by their style from the hackneyed recitative, as from the measured periods of our grand arias. The author has wished to produce an effect upon his hearers not by such and such a phrase or page, but by the entire work, and in this he has quite succeeded. Thence arises the impossibility of extracting a melody, a fragment complete by itself, unless a whole scene be sung, like that in the third act, which by far exceeds the ordinary proportions of a duet; thence it comes also that the separate pieces which are played at concerts, the prelude, the religious march, the wedding march, have their full power only when in their natural place in the drama, preceded and followed by the parts with which they are connected.

Each act is equally admirable, considered in its *ensemble*, and he would indeed do well, who could say to which of the three should be given the preference; to the first, with those magnificent recitatives of the king, the poetical entrance and chaste prayer of Elsa, the descent of Lohengrin, the cries of the wondering crowd, the farewell of the knight to his swan, and

[1] *Lohengrin and Tannhäuser* (Brockhaus, Leipsic, 1851).

the grand finale of the duel; — to the second, with the scene where Ortrude arouses the pride of Frederick, with the revery of Elsa and the hypocritical supplications of Ortrude, the brilliant trumpet-calls at the break of day, the magnificent religious march and the startling intervention of Frederick; — or to the third, with the wedding march and the betrothal chorus, the incomparable love duet; finally the reunion of all the feudatory lords on the Field of May, and the recitatives, by turns resigned and triumphant, of the knight who returns to guard the Holy Grail.

The success obtained at Weimar through the efforts of Liszt was widely re-echoed, and rapidly spread over all Germany; for thirty years and more, this work, which French writers, hostile yesterday, to-day declare a masterpiece, has been victoriously established upon the lyric stages of the entire world.[1]

Not only is it the opera which obtains every year the greatest number of representations at Vienna and Berlin, but it is considered a classic in Russia, where a whole school, which has produced very remarkable works, look with less favor upon Wagner's later productions; it is accepted in Spain and Italy, applauded in the New World. It has not been long since it was played simultaneously at two London theatres, and gave rise to a friendly rivalry between Nilsson and Albani in the rôle of Elsa; finally it appears regularly on the play-bills at Brussels, where the French language is spoken, and this constant return of the work, always well received and assured of success, seems as natural in Belgium as would that of *William Tell* and the *Huguenots* in Paris.

Moreover, wherever *Lohengrin* is played at present, those

[1] *Lohengrin* was represented at Wiesbaden in 1853; at Leipsic, Schwerin, Frankfort, Darmstadt, Breslau and Stettin in 1854; at Cologne, Hamburg, Riga and Prague in 1855; at Munich and Vienna in 1858; in Berlin and Dresden in 1859, etc., etc. — *Lohengrin*, in French, translated by M. Ch. Nuitter, was played for the first time at the *théâtre de la Monnaie* at Brussels, on March 22, 1870.

hearers who are unprejudiced, with minds free to receive new impressions, are always struck, delighted, overpowered by this symphony accompanying and commenting on the drama. They are taken captive by the pure Wagnerian idea, that is to say, by the return, the contact and the fusion of divers characteristic phrases, reappearing under the most different aspects, contradicting each other, or combining, according to the taste, not of the composer, but of the drama, and forming thus an incomparable symphonic whole. Those who, not understanding Wagner, wish to depreciate him, declare that he has only imitated Weber, and so many other composers who have also made conspicuous certain melodies, and repeated them in different situations. But there is a whole world between the manner in which Weber sometimes repeats once or twice certain principal phrases, always with their full development, and the fashion in which Wagner, once these type-motives fixed, takes them up again, couples them, and combines them into a symphonic tissue of a single piece, such as no composer before him has ever conceived.

Now it is to the honor of the first partisans, not to have laughed at such a stroke of genius, as Berlioz has done, and to have comprehended what new horizons such initiative was opening to musical art.

RICHARD WAGNER AS ORCHESTRAL LEADER.
German caricature by Gust. Paul, 1863.

CHAPTER VII

RICHARD WAGNER IN EXILE — THEORETICAL WRITINGS — COMPOSITION OF THE NIBELUNGEN

RICHARD WAGNER, exiled from Germany, arrived at Paris in the middle of the month of May, 1849. In counselling him to go to France, Liszt hoped that Wagner would be able to establish himself there, and Wagner had allowed this hope to enter his own heart. But from the first step in Paris, discouragement took possession of him. He tried to make himself known by publishing in a French journal a series of articles setting forth his views upon Art and the Revolution; but that came to nothing, and the director of the *Débats*, to whom Liszt had introduced him, told him frankly that Paris was more disposed to amuse herself than to discuss seriously the theories of a German musician upon the relations between his art and politics. Having once ascertained the sad condition of music in France, and the aversion of all the directors to risk upon the stage a tragic grand opera, Wagner resolved to leave Paris, and the month of June found him in Zurich, where several of his political friends from Dresden had taken refuge. Here he settled down, and in the month of October he became a citizen of that town, whither his wife had come to join him. These years of exile were, on the whole, sweet to him, for he says: "It would be impossible to describe my joy, after I had passed through the first unpleasant impressions, and felt myself free at last from the world of torturing and ever unsatisfied wishes,

free from the annoying surroundings which gave birth to those wishes." A wonderful transformation was accomplished in Richard Wagner during that period. He devoted himself to writing, in order to explain and to defend his ideas, and these first years of exile are marked by a long series of theoretical and critical writings. "My mental state," said he, in speaking of these books and essays "resembled a contest; I endeavored to express theoretically that which I was unable to express by a direct creation, by reason of the entire lack of harmony between my artistic aspirations and the tendencies of the public, particularly on the subject of opera."

The first of these papers is *Art and the Revolution*, in which political and social prejudices dominate, culminating in the conclusion that nothing short of a complete revolution can put people in a condition to enjoy pure and true art. Wagner goes back to the theatre of Eschylus and of Sophocles, in which he finds perfect art, the superb manifestation of a race in which men develop themselves with all freedom, knowing and worshiping only the forces of nature, which are personified in their gods. Why has this art declined? For the same reasons that apply to the social state itself: because, first, antique Rome by its pride of domination, then Christianity by its contempt for the world, and finally modern industry by its thirst for luxury and gain, which conquers even artists, have equally stifled art, and turned the human mind from the contemplation of the pleasures of the forces of nature. Let us then have a revolution, which shall overturn the whole social structure, sweep away all the prejudices which blind and degrade man, and bring him back to the natural state, in which he will be able to comprehend art, and make it his aim."[1]

This pamphlet, which gave only an indication of his theories, was soon followed by a long work which occupied Wagner for several months, and which he entitled *Art Work*

[1] *Richard Wagner*, by L. Bernardini.

of the Future, in order to indicate that his ideal would not be realized immediately; he dedicated this work to Feuerbach, expressing his gratitude for the good which the latter's philosophical works had done him. Unfortunately Wagner has allowed himself to adopt the phraseology of Feuerbach, and has applied it to his own theories to such an extent that the result is very puzzling to the reader, and the work, of an animated style and a real value, is in every respect painful to read. He takes up the ideas outlined in the preceding short treatise, and develops them after his own fashion.

"Poetry, mimetics and music were united in the drama of the Greeks; the drama disappeared with the downfall of the Athenian state; the union of the arts was dissolved, each had an existence of its own, and at times sank to the level of a mere pastime. Attempts made during the renaissance and since, to reunite the arts, were more or less abortive, though the technique and width of range of most of the arts increased. In our day each separate branch of art has reached its limits of growth, and cannot overstep them without incurring the risk of becoming incomprehensible, fantastic, absurd. At this point each art demands to be joined to a sister art—poetry to music, mimetics to both; each will be ready to forego egotistical pretensions, for the sake of an artistic whole, and the musical drama may become for future generations what the drama of Greece was to the Greeks." [1]

In 1850 the *New Musical Gazette* of Leipsic published, without warning, an article entitled *Judaism in Music*, signed by the pseudonym of K. Freigedank (free thoughts).[2]

[1] Grove's Musical Dictionary, *Wagner*, p. 367.

[2] When an enlarged edition appeared in pamphlet form (Leipsic, 1869), Wagner signed his own name to it, and a storm of articles and pamphlets poured in from all sides. If he desired a commotion his wish was gratified, for instantly this pamphlet and other works of his, unknown until then, found hosts of purchasers. His friends sought to exonerate him; Meyerbeer, said they, when he patronized

As this journal, then edited by Brendel, had only a few hundred readers, his violent attack against the Jewish race, and particularly against Jewish composers, did not make so much noise at first as Wagner had expected. The only immediate effect was a vindictive feeling in musical circles against the editor, in default of the real author, who was suspected, but who remained concealed. As Brendel was teaching history of music at the Conservatory of Leipsic, eleven of the professors called upon him to abandon his chair or to unmask the writer; but Brendel refused to submit to this alternative; he kept his place and guarded his secret.

Meanwhile the true name of the author was on every tongue, so recognizable was his style, and already many of the journalists were becoming openly hostile to him, for he had attacked the most powerful and the most applauded of German musicians, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. He delivers himself of the opinion that Jews, in whatever language they may express themselves, have always the air of foreigners speaking an acquired language, not their natural tongue; and he concludes therefore that they are incompetent to interpret ideas or sentiments through the medium of song, — that they then become insupportable and repugnant. The civilized Jew, when he attempts to manifest himself in art, is inspired by only the most ordinary and trivial things, for his pretended

Wagner in the beginning of his career, did so for his own interest, and in order to make sure of an ally which he could not secure among the foremost musicians. Such masters as Spohr and Marschner, Mendelssohn and Schumann appreciated only the commercial talents of Meyerbeer, and regarded his music as an ingeniously constructed farce, etc. It is possible that Meyerbeer had had a vague idea of enlisting Wagner in his cause, which was mainly sustained by literary adherents and newspaper men; but it is none the less true that he had protected Wagner in a very efficacious manner, and that a letter from him had decided the acceptation of *Rienzi* at Dresden; it is none the less true that on several occasions he had solicited the intervention of Meyerbeer and these considerations should have prevented him from writing as he did.

artistic instinct is but his natural instinct for gain, and leads him to sacrifice pure art for such or such a form, fashionable, and consequently lucrative; "Small matter what he creates, provided he forces attention; he has but one anxiety, that for form." After all sorts of amenities of this nature addressed to the Jewish race in general, he attacks openly and individually his two enemies, a mistake which a more prudent person would not have committed.

In regard to Mendelssohn, he declares that no other Jewish composer excites his sympathy to an equal degree, and that it is a sad sight to see him struggle against the original impotence to which he is condemned by his birth; "The result at which we have arrived by an examination of the reasons for our antipathy to the Jewish element, all of which is contradictory to itself and to us; its inability to put itself *en rapport* with us; its unsuccessful attempts to develop fruits germinated in our soil, from which it is excluded; all this is shown to the highest degree, and as a truly tragic conflict, in the nature, in the life, in the artistic productions of Mendelssohn, who died so young. In this man we recognize the fact that a Jew may be gifted with the grandest, the most beautiful talent; that he may have received the most careful, the most extensive education; that he may have the highest, noblest ambition, without once succeeding, notwithstanding all these advantages, in producing upon our minds and our hearts, that profound impression which we expect from music, which we know it to be capable of, having proved it so many times when the heroes of our art have permitted us to listen to their accents."

For Meyerbeer there are fewer circumlocutions: "The faculty for deceiving is so great on the part of this artist, that he deceives even himself, and perhaps intentionally, as much for his own sake as for the sake of the public. We believe as a matter of fact, that he would like very much to create works

of art, and that he knows his inability to do so; in order to avoid this painful conflict between his will and his faculty, he composes operas for Paris, and has them executed in other countries, — which is in our day the surest method of acquiring the glory of an artist without being one. When we see him thus borne down by the trouble which he takes to deceive himself, he appears to us almost in the light of a tragic character; but there was so much self-interest at work with him that he could not prevent himself from dabbling with the *comique;* moreover, Judaism which reigns in the arts, and which the composer represents in his music, is distinguished particularly by its inability to move us, and by the element of ridicule which is inherent in it."

Between the followers of the first, who had a profound horror of the second, and those of the second who were jealous above all of the position of serious composer acquired by Mendelssohn, Wagner denounced a third party; those of the Jews, who continued to compose, and who sought to prevent all scandal between the two factions in order to ward off an attack upon themselves, and to be able to pursue their work in peace. "These people," said he, "consider the fruitful success of Meyerbeer's operas; the very moment a thing succeeds they think that it must have merit although they may not wholly approve of it, or judge it solidly founded."

He concludes as follows: "We have yet to speak of another Jew who is appearing among us as an author. He has renounced his faith, and has united with us, in order to deliver himself; he has not succeeded, and has been forced to the consciousness that he cannot succeed, *except by seeking with us the common deliverance which is to make true men of us all.* But, to become one with us, it is necessary first of all for the Jews to cease to be Jews. Boerne has ceased to be one, and he is just the man who understands that this deliverance cannot be obtained through inertia, through a cold and calm in-

difference, but that it is for the Jews as for us, a struggle fraught with difficulty, suffering and unhappiness. Let the Jews frankly take part in this struggle, which is to destroy our present nature, and we will be united and inseparable. Let them bear in mind at the same time, that the deliverance from the malediction which weighs upon them, may be nothing less

RICHARD WAGNER IN 1855.
From an engraving on wood.

than that of Ahasuerus, — Annihiliation." All hail to Schopenhauer!

Wagner published about the same time, other articles, which made less commotion, — theoretical papers and personal souvenirs, which he sent to the right and to the left in Germany. During the first two years which he passed at Zurich, besides writing numerous critical works, he conducted grand orchestral conçerts, and directed the execution of his works at the Stadttheatre, assisted already by his young dis-

ciples, Carl Ritter and Hans von Bülow; he called together conferences on the musical drama, at which he read *The Death of Siegfried* by way of an example; finally, upon the advice of his friends, who always dreamed of a decisive success for him at Paris, he joined forces with a French librettist, and mapped out a drama on the Scandinavian legend of *Wieland le forgeron*, in which he embodied himself and recounted his own misfortunes.

He hoped that this poem, once finished and translated into French verse, would find a ready welcome, and in order to hasten the affair, he went himself to Paris in February, 1850; the German journals went so far as to inform their readers that he lived part of the time in Paris, and part in Brussels, and that he employed his leisure in translating into German *The Mysteries of Paris* by Eugene Sue. He did nothing of all this, and whatever step he might have attempted he would have run against *The Prophet*, which had just been played during the preceding year, and which, being helped along by Meyerbeer, occupied then the whole attention of the musical world. The despair which took possession of him, added to the poor state of his health, brought on a nervous trouble; he was obliged to spend some time at Bordeaux and at Villeneuve, on Lake Geneva, in order to recuperate, and in the month of July he was on his way back to Zurich. He completely abandoned his *Wieland*, in order to set to music *The Death of Siegfried*, but more than all, he devoted himself to his critical writings, and during the year 1851 he published at about the same time the famous *Communication to My Friends*, — so often quoted under the form of preface to the three poems of *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*, united in one volume, — and his most important theoretical work entitled *Opera and Drama*.

This work, which contains neither politics nor pseudo-philosophy, is divided into three parts: first, *Opera and the Essence*

of Music; second, *The Theatre and the Essence of Dramatic Poetry;* third, *Poetry and Music in the Drama of the Future;* and all three tend to demonstrate that in the opera, music as a means of expression has been taken as the only object and aim, whereas the true aim, the drama, has been made subordinate to the musical forms. The respective situation then of the two arts has been completely reversed, and the efforts of the author are directed towards re-establishing it.

Whence comes this evil? From the Italian dramatic cantata, embryo of the opera, in which the scenery and action were only an excuse for the airs, in which the task of the composer was limited to writing pieces according to the type adopted by such or such a subject, or singer. When the ballet was added, the musician was obliged to reproduce popular dance forms, as he reproduced popular songs for the voice, with elaborate variations; the songs were connected by means of conventional recitatives; as for the dance airs, they simply followed one another.

We see in Gluck the first reformer, who made strenuous efforts to better adapt his music to dramatic action. He modified melody, in following the inflections, the accents of the spoken language; he put a stop to the display of pure virtuosity, and forced the singers to become the interpreters of his dramatic designs; but as to the form itself, — and this is the main point — he left the opera as he had found it. The whole work remains a collection of recitatives, airs, choruses and ballets as before, and Gluck's librettists furnished for his airs, words in which the action, without being absolutely neglected, was made a secondary consideration.

The great successors of Gluck,—Mehul, Cherubini, Spontini, developed the musical and dramatic *ensemble*, and thus freed themselves from the uninterrupted monologue formed by the airs of the ancient opera. This was a long step forward, and the opera acquired at that time its full development, at least in

all essentials; for although Mozart has produced pure music which is richer and more beautiful than that of Gluck, it is not questioned that the elements of the opera are precisely the same in the case of both of these masters. After them, in the works of Weber and of Spohr, of Rossini, Bellini, Auber, Meyerbeer, etc., the history of the opera is nothing more than the history of "operatic melody."

In the second part, Wagner occupies himself with form in the spoken drama. In that which bears upon this subject he indicates two distinct factors; first, the mediæval romance and its offspring the modern novel; then the Greek drama, or rather the essential form of that drama, such as is given in the Poetics of Aristotle. The greater part of Shakespeare's dramas are, for him, only dramatized histories, whereas those of Racine are constructed according to the theories of Aristotle.

Continuing this study, he examines the works of Goethe and of Schiller, and arrives at this conclusion: that historical subjects offer great difficulties to dramatic treatment, and that the modern theatre takes a wrong step in pursuing the representation of contingent reality, instead of provoking the exercise of our imaginative faculties. Schiller, for example, was crushed beneath the mass of historical facts contained in his *Wallenstein*, while Shakespeare, by way of exciting his spectator's imagination, would have given him the vision of the whole of the thirty years war, in the same time occupied by the trilogy of the German poet.

He goes on to establish an ingenious comparison between the tragedy of Racine and the opera of Gluck. Racine, says he, gives less heed to action, properly speaking, than to the motives which determine it, and the effects which result from it; now, Gluck's instincts impelled him to translate the *tirade* of Racine into the *aria*. In view of the difficulties experienced by Goethe and Schiller in their efforts to fuse dramatic matter

RICHARD WAGNER, ABOUT 1857.

After a lithograph.

and poetic form, Wagner asserts that mythical subjects are best for an ideal drama, and that music is the ideal language in which such subjects are best presented. In the third part he shows that it is only the wonderfully rich development of music in our time, totally unknown to earlier centuries, which could have brought about the possibility of a musical drama such as he has in view. The conclusions arrived at in *The Opera and Drama* are again discussed in his lecture *On the Destiny of the Opera* where particular stress is laid on the fact that music is the informing element of the new drama.

After having written so much, Wagner was seized with an intense longing to hear some of his music, and since he could not go to Germany, he desired that Germany should come to him. He undertook to organize at Zurich a musical week, consecrated exclusively to the execution of his works, as had been done at Weimar; and he addressed a pressing appeal to the musical societies of Germany and Switzerland, all of which, save that of Munich, responded to his request. He assembled thus an orchestra of seventy-two musicians, and a chorus in proportion. He had the theatre of Zurich arranged as a concert hall according to his own ideas; then, to enable the public to enter more easily into his thoughts, he wrote explanatory programs for the overture of *The Flying Dutchman* and the prelude of *Lohengrin*. The first concert, which comprised fragments of his four published operas, took place on the 18th of May 1853; when the master appeared at the desk, he was cheered by the whole assembly, and the orchestra saluted him with a thrice repeated *fanfare* of trumpets. At the third concert, which fell on the 22d of May, his birthday, enthusiasm knew no bounds; they covered him with wreaths of flowers, and with compliments in verse, after which one of the ladies in the chorus stepped from the ranks and presented him with a magnificent gold vase in the name of his comrades.

During the summer of 1853, he visited a place near Saint

Maurice, and from there he undertook a trip into the north of Italy. While travelling through Turin he heard an execution of Rossini's *Barber*, complete and correct to a degree which he had never heard in Germany; afterwards he went to Genoa, and it was during a sleepless night at Spezzia that the first ideas of the *Rheingold* music passed through his mind. He brought his journey to an end, and hastened to regain his tranquil home at Zurich, that he might not commence such a work on Italian soil. He put his whole heart into the work and at the close of the autumn he went to hunt up Liszt at Bâle, where he laid before him the entire poem of the Nibelungen; and Liszt reciprocated the courtesy by executing for him alone, as he would have done for a sovereign, some of Beethoven's last sonatas. Once reunited, they went together to Paris, where their presence was announced about the middle of October, but they remained there but a short time. The German journals openly attributed this visit, so closely following the preceding one, to the ever increasing desire on Wagner's part to hear one of his operas performed at Paris, and they even designated the theatre and the work: the Theatre Lyrique and *Tannhäuser;* but it is very improbable that Jules Sévest, then director of the Lyrique, where they were giving the *Bijou Perdu*, and where they were going to represent *La Promise*, had ever dreamed of *Tannhäuser*. Be that as it may, Wagner retreated to Zurich in the month of November, and plunged himself into *The Nibelungen.*

This was the great work of his exile. But how had he come to make four works out of a simple opera like *The Death of Siegfried.* "When I attempted," says he, "to dramatize the most important moment of the myth of the Nibelungen in *The Death of Siegfried*, I found it necessary to indicate a great number of antecedent facts, in a manner which would give the essential episodes their true coloring. But I could only recount these preparatory facts, whereas I felt the necessity of

making them enter into the dramatic action itself; this is how I came to write *Siegfried.* But here a new embarrassment presented itself; I did not come anywhere near finding the means of incorporating all that was necessary in order to make the dramatic action explain itself." And it was thus that in tracing the legend back, he came to write *The Walküre* and the general prologue to his trilogy, *The Rheingold.* The poem, as before mentioned, had been published in 1853, only for the friends of the author. Having once commenced to write the music, after his precipitate return from Italy, things proceeded rapidly. In May, 1854, the score of *The Rheingold* was completed. In June he commenced *The Walküre,* which he finished the following year, and as for *Siegfried,* the first outlines of which date from 1854, he had finished the first two acts of it by the spring of 1857.

This elaborate work was interrupted for short periods, once by the rehearsals and representations of *Tannhäuser* at Zurich, in February, 1855, once by a violent attack of erysipelas which he had in the spring of 1856, later by a prolonged visit from Liszt, during which Wagner conducted at Saint Gall the *Heroic Symphony,* and Liszt his *Symphonic Poems, Orpheus* and *The Preludes;* but he was obliged to totally abandon his work when he arranged to go to London to direct the eight concerts of the *Philharmonic* Society. In the month of January, 1855, one of the directors, Mr. Anderson, had come to Zurich to see him, and to lay before him the embarrassment of the Society, which, since the death of Mendelssohn, had experienced the greatest difficulty in finding each year an orchestral leader of renown; it was tired of Lindpaintner; Spohr could not come, and Berlioz had been engaged for the season which was about to open, by the rival society, the *New Philharmonic.* After having heard *Tannhäuser* at Zurich, Mr. Anderson departed, carrying with him the desired promise from Wagner.

The latter, announced by numerous editorial puffs, arrived at London on the last of February; but before beginning his duties he saw that the journalists, particularly Mr. Dawson of the *Times* and the *Musical World*, and Mr. Chorley of the *Athenæum*, who led the campaign, were violently opposed to him. It was still worse when they learned that the unworthy successor of the celebrated Michael Costa was acting contrary to the so-called traditions of Mendelssohn; that he demanded of the orchestra more energy and life; that he was not willing for them to play everything with a colorless uniformity, nor to precipitate the movements inordinately, etc. Then all the inhospitable diatribes were summed up in the general cry "that he was going to treat Mozart, Cherubini, Beethoven, as if they also had written *music of the future*."

The eight concerts of the season commenced on the 12th of March and closed on the 25th of June; outside of the classic repertoire, Wagner directed only two pieces of his own; the overture to *Tannhäuser* and a selection from *Lohengrin* (prelude, wedding march, march and chorus of the betrothal). The overture to *Tannhäuser* was such a success that Prince Albert demanded a repetition of it for the seventh concert, at which the entire royal family was present; this was a new triumph, and the queen, in course of the evening, had the author summoned to her box in order to congratulate him.

Among other complaints against Wagner, he was criticised severely for his habit of directing Beethoven's symphonies from memory, which was called mere affectation of contempt; and this judgment was made known to him; labor lost, for at the last rehearsal of the *Heroic*, there was no sign of a score. This was too much, and Wagner was made to promise that he would direct at the concert with the symphony before his eyes. He kept his word, and the execution proceeded in a masterly fashion; then his critics pressed about him to congratulate him. "Were we not right? This is a very different

matter from yesterday! How well you have caught the movement of the *scherzo!* Bravely done!" And while they were all talking, one of them seized the score lying open upon the desk. Horrors! It was *The Barber of Seville*, and a piano arrangement at that! The farce is unique, and is like Wagner. Rossini, later on, so it is said, attempted to decipher *Tannhäuser* upside down; "It will not go any other way," said he. This story very likely sprung from the other one, — a Roland for an Oliver.

Meanwhile Wagner, openly sustained by the Prince Consort, had finished by gaining the good will of the British public as well as of his orchestra, and the eighth and last concert attained for him a reparative ovation. Immediately he turned his back upon London, and some years after, peremptorily refused to return there; it was a long time before he went again, this time to try to repair the deficit of the *Nibelungen*.

"Magnificent orchestra, so far as the principal artists were concerned" — wrote he in reviewing this three months' campaign — "superb sound, the leading musicians provided with incomparable instruments; solid *esprit de corps*, but no particular style. The fact is that the gentlemen of the Philharmonic Society, orchestra and audience, consume more music than they are able to digest. As a rule, one hour of music requires several hours of rehearsing. How can it be expected that a director with the small amount of time at his disposal, can properly prepare the enormous programs which the directors put before him. Two symphonies, two overtures, a concerto and two or three songs at each concert. The directors continually remind me of what they are pleased to call the traditions of Mendelssohn; but I suspect that Mendelssohn was simply subject to the traditions of the Society. One morning when we commenced to rehearse the overture to *Leonore* I was astonished. All was cloudy, characterless, indistinct, as if the musicians were worn out, and had not slept

for a week. Was such a thing to be tolerated on the part of the famous philharmonic orchestra? I stopped them and addressed them in French; 'I know very well, said I to them, what you are capable of doing, and I expect nothing less from you.' Some of them understood me, and translated; they were all astounded, but they felt that I was right and they took it good-naturedly. They commenced the overture again, and the rehearsal proceeded admirably. I have every reason to believe that the majority of the artists had come to appreciate me before I was obliged to leave them."

He was right. And yet when he departed, the *Musical World*, stubborn in its hostility, launched after him the following: "Mr. Richard Wagner has left London, the very next day after the last concert of the Philharmonic Society, delighted no doubt to depart in all haste from a city so wrapt in impenetrable darkness, and so deaf to the prophetic voice of the future."

At London Wagner had encountered Berlioz, who had come to direct the rival orchestra; but notwithstanding this unexpected competition, and in spite of their contrary ideas upon art, they had renewed their pleasant relations. After his return to Zurich, Wagner invited Berlioz to visit him, but the latter was not able to arrange this "reunion, which would have been for me a veritable treat," writes he in his very cordial response; he asks Wagner to send him *Tannhäuser*, to add to *Lohengrin* which he already possesses; he promises him in return his *Te Deum*, *l'Enfance du Christ* and *Lélio* which is about to appear, and he goes on to say "So you are in a fair way to melt the glaciers, while composing your *Nibelungen*. It must be superb to write thus in the presence of grand nature! A happiness which has so far been denied me! Beautiful landscapes, lofty summits, the grand aspects of the ocean, completely absorb me, instead of inspiring me with ideas. It is then that I feel, and cannot express. I can depict the moon

only when regarding her image in the bottom of a well. It is all one; if we lived a hundred years from now, I think we would be set right by many things and many men. The old Majesty on high must laugh up there in his ancient beard, at the constant success of the farce which he makes of us. But I will not speak ill of him; he is one of your friends and I know you take his part. I am impious, full of respect for the mag-pious. Pardon this frightful pun, with which I close, with friendly greetings."[1]

Wagner hoped, by working without relaxation, to finish the trilogy in 1859; he projected having a provisional theatre erected at Zurich, where he would give himself the treat of seeing it performed; but on reflection, he saw that such an enterprise was impracticable in a town of so few musical resources; that he would have to gather in artists from the four quarters of Germany, and that the opening representation of this four-day festival would require enormous sums of money, which he did not know where to find. All these reasons, and the fear also that it would not soon be finished, joined to the ardent desire which he had to hear one of his works, conforming absolutely to his definite ideas upon the musical drama, led him to write an opera of ordinary length, and of a moderately easy *mise en scène*. A trifling incident sufficed to decide him upon this course. A certain individual claiming to be sent from the Emperor of Brazil, came to ask him if he would be willing to compose a work for the Italian troupe who were playing at Rio Janeiro, under what conditions he would do so, and if he would agree to come and personally direct the execution of it.[2]

The composer, much surprised at the proposition, hesitated

[1] Berlioz's letter to Wagner, Sept. 10, 1855.

[2] This offer from Rio Janeiro seems to have had a serious foundation, for the emperor of Brazil was, later on, one of the patrons of the Bayreuth theatre, and was present at the first execution of the *Nibelungen*.

THE RHINEGOLD.

The Rhinedaughters. — Scene I.

about giving a formal reply, but in order to be ready at all events, he laid aside the trilogy, and devoted himself to the shorter poem. This was in the summer of 1857, and the poem was that of *Tristan and Isolde*, which had shortly before presented itself to his mind, at the same time as *Parsifal;*[1] he had traced the first outline of it in 1854 or 1855, soon after having published the first sketch of *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, and when he had just been initiated into the philosophy of Schopenhauer. It was indeed in 1851 that the appearance of the *Parerga und Paralipomena* had so greatly surprised intellectual Germany, and stirred up such a general reprobation against the official representatives of the philosophy in the universities, who had kept quiet about the preceding works by the same author. The little colony of refugees at Zurich did not allow itself to be forestalled in saluting in Schopenhauer a mighty moralist, and Wagner in particular, accepting with closed eyes his metaphysical doctrine, adhered to his teaching, of which he pretended, later, to develop some of the most debatable points. In 1854, he sent to him at Frankfort a copy of the *Ring of the Nibelungen*, in testimony "of gratitude and veneration." Schopenhauer, although he played the flute, like Frederick the Great, surely did not expect so much from a simple musician.

Wagner, having again taken up the reading of *Tristan*, finished it very quickly, in the beginning of 1857, and during the winter of that year, he gave the first act to the publishers, Breitkopf and Härtel. Towards the month of January, 1858,

[1] He had already written, in 1856, the outline of a Buddhist drama, which lent itself better than the Celtic legend of *Tristan and Isolde* to the expansion of the theories of Schopenhauer, and the plan of which was found, dated at Zurich, May 16, 1856, among his posthumous papers; this is as far as he ever got with this drama. Finally, the outline of *Parsifal* was sketched by him in the spring of 1857. One may see that all these subjects germinated almost simultaneously in his mind, and that there would be no improbability of discovering traces of the influence of Schopenhauer even in *Parsifal*.

he was again in Paris, always, its appears, with the intention of having one of his operas heard there, and Arban signified his intention of having the overture to *Tannhäuser* executed in honor of the foreign musician. But Wagner could not stay long in Paris; he left very quickly, and pursued the composition of *Tristan and Isolde*, of which the second act was written at Venice, where the Austrian authorities had permitted him to reside, and dated at that city, March 2, 1859; finally the third act was finished at Lucerne, in the month of August of the same year. He saw that nothing was coming from the direction of Brazil, and so immediately took steps to have one of his operas performed in Germany; he concluded arrangements with the theatre of Carlsruhe.

He was hoping that the grand duke of Baden, after having authorized him to come and direct *Tristan and Isolde* in his capital, would consent to transform this temporary sojourn into a permanent residence, and during the summer of 1859, he made this request of him. It was refused; furthermore, he learned a short time afterwards that the representation of *Tristan* was declared impossible, and that the artists declined to play it. The same thing happened at Strasburg. Then all his hopes turned afresh towards Paris, since Germany was closed against him, and he formed the wild project of engaging German singers of the first rank, to organize at Paris, at the *Italiens*, during the following winter, a model representation of *Tristan and Isolde*, to which he would invite all the German directors; in this way he hoped to obtain the same result which he would have obtained at Carlsruhe. Henceforth this trip to Paris, which he had been planning for some time by way of diversion, in order to taste the pleasure of hearing the incomparable Conservatoire orchestra, took quite another importance in his eyes, and became an essential factor in his projects for the future. He had two objects in view in leaving Switzerland; he must first educate the French public, by

means of concerts, to the point of enjoying his music, and then he must realize his ardent desire to mount, at last, *Tristan and Isolde*.

JUDAISM IN MUSIC AS IT PLEASES RICHARD WAGNER.

This is only when it pays twenty-five florins for a seat.

Kikeriki, of Vienna, May 12, 1872.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO YEARS AT PARIS—CONCERTS AT THE ITALIENS—TANNHÄUSER AT THE OPERA

T was in the month of September, 1859, that Wagner went to install himself at Paris. He was known very little more than when he had left there seventeen years before, and the discussions raised by his dramatic works, as well as by his writings, had been but feebly echoed in France. People had not taken any notice of him, for the few lines of Gérard de Nerval about *Lohengrin* counted for nothing, and when Théophile Gautier, having heard *Tannhäuser* at the grand-ducal theatre of Wiesbaden in September, 1857, had communicated his impressions to the subscribers of the *Moniteur Universel*, the latter were much surprised that they should be addressed on the subject of this foreign musician. The more so, as Gautier, a great musical scholar, was not in the least wrought up at this hearing. He had figured to himself beforehand "a Wagner voluntarily devoid of melody, of rhythm and of breadth, a bold innovator, shaking off the established rules, inventing strange combinations, striving after unusual effects; a *paroxyste*, going to extremes in everything, overdoing violence, unloosing, apropos of nothing, the hurricane from the orchestra, and passing like a musical waterspout upon the astounded parterre; a genius complicated and furious, chaotic and fulgurating, a medley of vapors, darkness and lightning flashes, yielding to the ca-

prices of a wild inspiration, etc., etc." ; and in place of all that he had only discovered a musician "going back into the past towards the sources of music, instead of surpassing Weber and Meyerbeer."

Therefore, what was the use of speaking so at length of a work in which "the orchestration is full of fugues, of flowery counterpoint, of canons executed with great science, where there is no uncertainty, the apparent disorder being due to the

WAGNER OPENING HIS EASTER EGG.
CHAM, *Charivari*, March, 31, 1851.

absence of accented rhythm, which the master avoids as a matter of course, the same as he abstains from modulating." Another case of the mountain bringing forth a mouse.

Notwithstanding all, Wagner's name began to be spread abroad, and the *Gazette Musicale* had also felt called upon to give an account of this festival. "All that I can say," wrote its correspondent, "is that M. Richard Wagner appears to me very far from being an abundant and easy *mélodiste ;* cantilenas are very rare in his score." He recognizes, however, the charm of the song to the Evening Star, accompanied in the

Italian fashion, with a boldness of harmony absolutely German; he praises even the duet of Tannhäuser and Elizabeth, inferior as he deems it to that of Valentine and of Raoul; he applauds the march, built upon a theme full of grandeur and of freedom; finally he accords some praise to the overture, which might be compared to those of *Freischütz* and *Oberon;* then he concludes as follows: "It cannot be denied that Wagner resembles Weber in some respects. He manages the orchestra with remarkable ability. His instrumentation is clear, varied, brilliant, richly colored. He uses modulation too freely. He seeks unusual combinations. He is partial to harmonic effects. But from time to time he makes happy discoveries. . . M. Richard Wagner has undoubted talent, but he is heavy, stiff, formal. Socrates would certainly have counselled him to offer up sacrifices to the Graces. I would not be surprised if it were just this absence of grace which is to distin- the music of the future from that of the past. If this be so may I be condemned for all time to Weber and to Mozart." [1]

Meanwhile there was one man in Paris — perhaps the only one, — who was well acquainted with these operas and admired them profoundly: a modest employé of the Customs, Edmond Roche; and by a providential chance, this admirer was the very first Frenchman whom Wagner encountered when he was painfully wrestling with the formalities of the custom-house; an employé interposed, attracted by the noise of a dispute in which one of the parties made sad havoc with the French language; the traveller gave his name, and the employé saluted him immediately, assuring him that he was too happy to have served so great an artist. Would it not seem as if this episode, which savored of romance, were a good omen to the new-comer?

[1] At this representation at Wiesbaden, the role of Elsa was held by Mlle. Franziska Storck, those of Tannhäuser and Wolfram by Tichatschek and Simon; the orchestra was directed by Hagen, capellmeister of the duke of Nassau.

Wagner, who during his first sojourn at Paris, had seen scarcely any musicians, and had allied himself principally with painters and *littérateurs*, renewed his old relations and

M. WAGNER UNDERTAKING TO HAVE HIS MUSIC OF THE FUTURE PERFORMED BY MUSICIANS, LIKEWISE OF THE FUTURE.
CHAM, *Charivari*, February, 27, 1860.

formed new ones, so that he was soon able to hold at his house, receptions to his intimate friends, where were gathered many men who were to make their mark in letters and in the arts. He had at first taken temporary lodgings at No. 4 *rue*

de Matignon; then had rented in *rue Newton*, near *l'Arc de Triomphe*, a pretty little house, since demolished, where he lived alone with his wife, at a convenient distance from neighbors and pianos.

It was there, in a quarter then almost suburban, that he received his friends every Wednesday; one saw there Emile Ollivier, who had married at Florence, in 1857, the eldest daughter of Liszt and Mme. d'Agoult: a charming and deeply

AT A REHEARSAL OF TANNHÄUSER.

Sapristi, Monsieur Wagner, your music makes too much racket!
Ah, but it has got to be heard from here to Germany!

CHAM, *Charivari*, March, 1861.

artistic young woman[1]; Frédéric Villot, keeper of the imperial museums, to whom Wagner has dedicated the French translations of his four operatic poems; naturally, Edmond Roche, in recognition of his welcome at the Customs; Hector Berlioz, in remembrance of their relations in Germany and at London; Emile Perrin, a director then unoccupied, having left the

[1] She died at Saint Tropez in 1862. Her first name, Blandine, was given to her niece, the eldest daughter of Mme. Wagner, now Countess Gravina.

Opera-Comique, and not yet taken the Grand Opera; Carvalho, director of the Theatre-Lyrique, and strongly attracted by new works; Gustave Doré, in the meridian of his glory, and Jules Ferry, brought there by Emile Ollivier; then the writers: Ch. Baudelaire, Champfleury, Charles de Lorbac, Léon Leroy, Gasperini, who added enormously to the reputation of their host, in forcing the attention of the public by their cries of war, and their inflammatory articles. A little later, when Wagner had moved to No. 3 *rue d'Aumale*, one sometimes saw there a person who was to hold in course of time, the first place in his life and in his heart, the younger sister of Mme. Ollivier, Mlle. Cosima Liszt, married two years before to Hans von Bülow. The latter, at the summons of the master, had made the journey expressly to aid him in his preparations for the concerts.

Wagner was full of confidence. He believed he had found in M. Carvalho his ideal director, and so this worse than mediocre pianist, with an arch-false voice, subjected Carvalho to the punishment of a musical reading, which Gasparini has recounted in a most amusing fashion, and which put the victim to rout. At the same time, he was actively engaged in organizing concerts, which were to dispose the public in his favor. Surrounded on all sides by difficulties, he had given up his plan of representing *Tristan*, and wished simply to give some hearings of the principal fragments from his works, as he had already done at Zurich.

He had made the request, through the intervention of Mocquart, the emperor's private secretary, that the free use of the *Salle de l'Opera* be granted him; but receiving no response, he had concluded arrangements with Calzado, to rent, at a very high rate, the Ventadour theatre; scarcely had he signed the engagement when he received notice that the *Salle de l'Opera* was at his disposal; it was too late, and the concerts were given at the Italiens. While Wagner was

practising the orchestra at the *Salle Herz*, von Bülow was rehearsing the choruses at the *Salle Beethoven*, with all the more trouble, since, in order to have a good force of singers at a small expense, they had called upon the amateurs of the German colony at Paris.

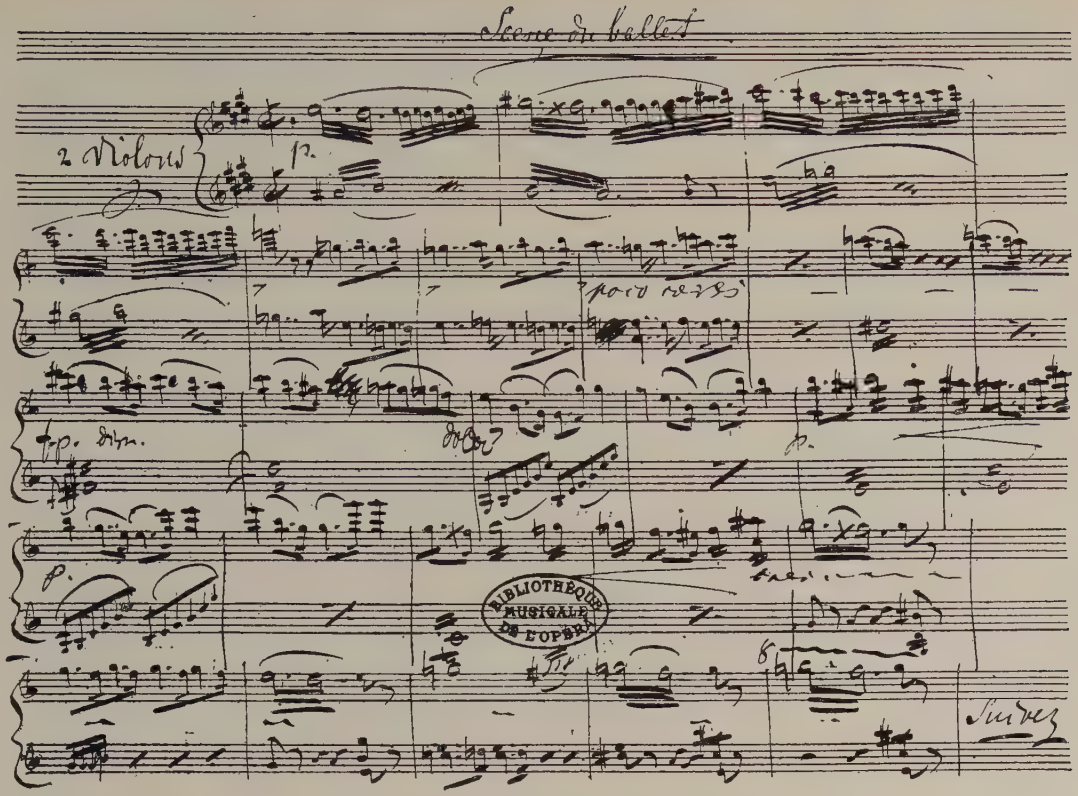
The three concerts took place on the 25th of January, the 1st and 8th of February, 1860. The program was identically the same for the three evenings; 1st, Overture to *The Flying Dutchman;* 2d, March with chorus, introduction to the third

"You are playing discords, my child."
"Mamma, it is *Tannhäuser*."
"Ah! that is different!"
(CHAM, *Charivari*, March 31, 1861.)

act, chorus of the pilgrims and overture, from *Tannhäuser;* 3d, Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde;* 4th, Prelude, betrothal march with chorus (from the second act), nuptial feast (introduction to the third act) and nuptial song from *Lohengrin*.[1]

The execution, notwithstanding so many united efforts, was very defective, and Wagner, feverish and nervous, only made

[1] At the second concert they added the Song to the Evening Star, from *Tannhäuser*, sung by M. Jules Lefort.



MANUSCRIPT MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER.

Preserved at the Musée of the Paris Opera.
Part for two violins, from the danse in Tannhäuser.

a bad matter worse. At the very opening of the concert he had given proof of his irascible and violent character — which had impressed everybody present — by spitefully throwing his gloves to the ground. The announcement of these concerts had produced some commotion in the musical world, but not outside of it; moreover, if there was a good deal of curiosity, it must be said also that there was no preconceived hostility.

To sum the matter up, the result of the concerts was very honorable for the artist, who had brought together those portions of his works which were the most clear and accessible to the public; and quite disastrous for the manager, who sustained a deficit of about six thousand francs; fortunately he was able to cover this sum by drawing upon the copyright which Messrs. Schott paid him for the *Ring of the Nibelungen*. Therefore he did not profit by the offer of Marshall Magnan, who proposed the *Salle de l'Opera* for a fourth concert, and he accepted an invitation to go to Brussels; he gave two concerts there in March, at the Grand Théâtre, and the pecuniary result was no more satisfactory than at Paris.

From Brussels he came straight back to Paris. The French press and the French public were surprised and disconcerted; what they had heard had appeared to them neither so transcendent as the master's admirers had proclaimed, nor so barbarous and painful as had been declared by his enemies. One remained as undecided as ever; as to the journals, just as, in desiring at any cost to appear informed about this musician who started up unexpectedly in the midst of Paris, they had confined themselves to fables; so, in attempting to pass immediate and final judgment upon him, they only talked nonsense. In fact the example had been set by a well-known theatrical critic, who, before Wagner's arrival, had given the battle cry. "Here comes a man long since renowned for the boldness of his attacks, and the dazzling fervor of his criticism.

REPRESENTATION OF "TANNHÄUSER," AT THE PARIS OPERA, IN 1861.

Final scene of the first act. After an engraving of the time.

Here comes a man who must be defied! He is the Marat of music, of which Berlioz is the Robespierre! His style is a thing undefined, his phrase a macaroni, a sticky melopæa. He has written some operas of which I do not even know the names, but for all that, I repeat it, defy him!"

And meanwhile, notwithstanding these cries of alarm, people waited. In the general embarrassment of the press and of the public, all eyes turned toward Berlioz, who was considered the leader of the advanced musical school in France; on the judgment which he was going to pass upon his former collaborator on the *Gazette Musicale*, and his former assistant at Dresden, depended to a great extent the final reception which Paris would accord to Richard Wagner. Finally it appeared, this article, and it was the open declaration of war which has so often been repeated, and upon which Wagner's latest enemies still lean for support. In writing this criticism, Berlioz yielded undoubtedly to an instinctive feeling of jealousy, and did not perceive, poor man, that in sinking his rival he would sink himself also; he did not suspect that the public made no distinction between them, and that the ruin of the one would entail the ruin of the other; later, after *Les Troyens*, he was forced to see that the public placed them, Wagner and himself, in the same category, when there appeared a caricature by Cham, which represented *Tannhäuser* demanding to see his little brother, *Les Troyens*. Until then he had been so blind in his opposition as to flatter himself that he had profited by thus overturning Wagner after his concerts, and in assisting by a studied contempt, without writing anything, in the ruin of *Tannhäuser*. The worst of it was that Wagner responded, and responded with some spirit, at least in the first part of the letter, while affecting a friendly style; "My dear Berlioz, the article in the *Journal des Débats* which you have been pleased to devote to my concerts, not only contains things very flattering to me and for which I thank you; it also furnishes

me the opportunity, which I seize with eagerness, to give you some summary explanations upon what you call *the music of the future*, and upon which you have believed yourself bound

TANNHÄUSER DEMANDING TO SEE HIS LITTLE BROTHER

(CHAM, *Charivari*, Nov. 25, 1863.)

to enlighten your readers. You also, you believe then that this title really covers a school of which I would be the leader; that I presumed one fine day to establish certain principles,

certain theses, which you divide into two categories; the first, fully adopted by you and containing only truths long since recognized by everybody; the second, which excites your reprobation, and which comprises only a web of absurdities? To attribute to me the foolish vanity of wishing to make old axioms pass for new, or the mad pretension of imposing as incontestible principles what are known in every tongue as stupidities, would be at once to misunderstand my character, and to do an injury to the little intelligence which heaven has bestowed upon me. Your explanations on this subject, permit me to say to you, seem to me a little uncertain, and as your good will is perfectly known to me, you only require, certainly, that I relieve you of your doubt, if not your error."

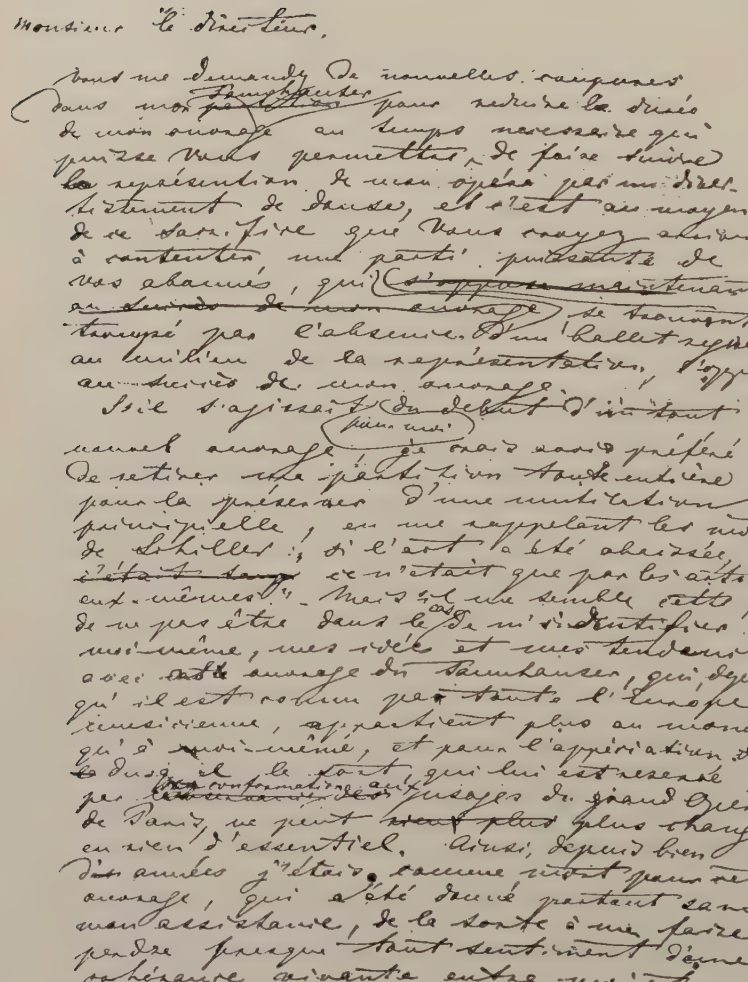
This letter, much developed, then carried the discussion into a field quite philosophic, where nobody, neither Berlioz nor the other readers, followed Wagner; but the beginning of it sufficed to unite everybody in league against a musician who did not accept his lessons silently, and who presumed to teach his judges. After that, the feeling of opposition was universal, and there was no end of jokes about the new-comer, and his wild conception of the music of the future; caricatures appeared on every hand which excited general applause, because they responded so exactly to public sentiment; from that day Richard Wagner's cause at Paris was irrevocably lost.

He had not much hope, moreover, of having *Tannhäuser* represented at the Opera. It was rather in the direction of the Theatre-Lyrique and of M. Carvalho that he was looking for an opportunity, when Mme. von Metternich obtained word from the Emperor, ordering immediate preparations for the work to be made at the Academy of Music. It was her desire to raise again in the eyes of the musical world, a German composer, cruelly turned to ridicule, and this unexpected

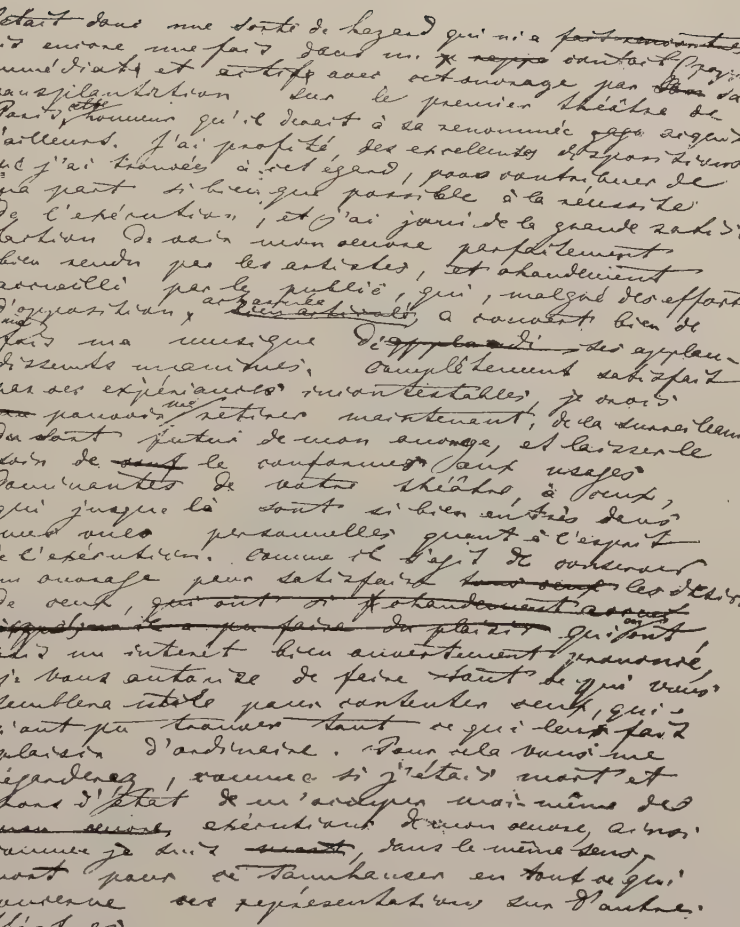
news came to Wagner just at the moment when, confronted by all sorts of obstacles, he was turning anew his anxious glance towards Germany. He was quite wild with joy, without shutting his eyes, however, to the many difficulties to be surmounted before arriving at a complete realization of his ideal.

To begin with, everybody received him with sympathy; there is nothing like the acknowledged favor of a man to calm hostilities, and change indifference into zealous interest; Richard Wagner, in a few days had become all the fashion. He reigned, so to speak, at the Opera, which at that time depended on the emperor's household, and where everything was done to satisfy him. At only one point was he thwarted; he wanted the new baritone Faure to create the rôle of Wolfram, but as the latter demanded eight thousand francs a month, he was obliged to content himself with Morelli, whom he engaged at three thousand francs. There were also some difficulties to be settled as to the number of supplementary instruments, but an understanding was finally reached by means of concessions here and there. One artist only was capable, in Wagner's eyes, of personifying Tannhäuser, a tenor very young and well pleased with himself, who sung the master's operas in Germany, and contributed greatly to their success; young Niemann was engaged at six thousand francs a month, with the express condition that *under no pretext whatever* should he sing in any other opera than *Tannhäuser*.

This tenor was given all sorts of masters, in order to prepare him for the French stage, and the author on his side exerted himself to train the interpreters whom he had chosen, and imbue them with his methods; he took particular pains with Mme. Tedesco (Venus), whose unfitness, notwithstanding her beautiful voice, was soon apparent to him, and whom he treated so badly at the rehearsals, that one day, in an excess of Italian rage, she almost flew at his face; also with the



FIRST DRAUGHT OF AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER FROM RICHARD WAGNER TO THE
(Rough draught not dated.)



DIRECTOR OF THE OPERA, AFTER THE SECOND REPRESENTATION OF "TANNHÄUSER."
(Opera Archives.)

baritone Morelli, from whom he obtained sacrifices quite surprising on the part of a singer from beyond the mountains; and finally Mme. Marie Sax, who had at that time only an incomparable voice, but who learned under Wagner's harsh teaching to play almost with warmth and conviction.[1]

As to the stage settings and decorations, to which he attached so much importance, he found in them unalloyed satisfaction, and could not conceal his delight; never had he dared to hope for such miracles, such perfection in all the details. His confidence returned, his enthusiasm overflowed

"Papa, I would like to learn music."
"Impossible, my child. One does not know how it might turn out. You might become a Wagner! Mercy!"
(CHAM, *Charivari*, March 31, 1861.)

at seeing the progress of the choruses, of the orchestra, of the soloists, and all these gigantic preparations for one of his operas, when for more than ten years such a pleasure had been denied him. One day he exclaimed before Gasperini, "This is the ideal representation after which I have yearned so long. Royer is converted, he has understood me, I have

[1] The other roles were sung by Cazaux (the landgrave), Coulon (Biterolf), Rinies, König, Fréret and Mlle. Réboux. Mlles. Rousseau, Troisvallets, and Stoikoff represented the three Graces in the tableau of Venusberg.

him fast! At last people will be able to judge of this much-attacked *Tannhäuser*, and it is to France that I will owe this glory!"

For a translation of his work he appealed to Edmond Roche, a poet of some talent; he hurried him, worried him, worked him like a galley slave, binding him to the task at seven o'clock in the morning, never releasing him until nightfall and only permitting him to swallow a mouthful when Roche, worn out, let his pen fall, and appeared on the point of fainting. It was a desperate chase with the musician-poet and his translator, after the syllable indispensable, unique, undiscoverable, which ought to strike upon such or such a note in order to render at the same time the accent of the music and the sense of the poem. Roche, who did not understand German, had engaged to assist him, with Wagner's knowledge and approval, one of his friends of German origin, named Richard Lindau, who boasted of being both poet and musician, and who gave Roche the literal sense of the poem. The translation thus brought to an end, not without difficulty, and through the desperate impatience of Wagner who was always urging his collaborators to go faster, had been submitted to the director of the Opera during the month of June; but the latter had immediately declared that the unrhymed verse of the German recitatives ought to be translated into rhymed French verse, and not into blank verse, as Roche and Lindau had done. For reviewing their translation, very defective in many respects, he had recommended to Wagner M. Charles Nuitter, who was accustomed to work of that sort, having already translated *Romeo and Juliet* for the Opera, and *Oberon* for the Theatre-Lyrique.

Nuitter went over the work again with Edmond Roche and Richard Wagner; but M. Lindau, much vexed at being dismissed, brought action against the musician in order to determine his rights as collaborator, and to demand that his

name appear on the play-bills and libretti. The affair was called March 6th, 1861, seven days previous to the first representation of *Tannhäuser*, before the first chamber of the civil

Still fearing for her Rhine Provinces . . . . Germany sends *Tannhäuser* to put France to sleep.
(CHAM, *Charivari*, March 25, 1861.)

tribunal, presided over by M. Benoist-Champy. The lawyer Marie pleaded for the plaintiff, who was recommended as a translator by Berlioz, as a singer and composer of romances, by Gounod; Ollivier appeared for Richard Wagner, and the

two advocates vied with each other in quoting passages from Wagner which seemed to them the most likely to aid the opinion of the judges. The latter non-suited M. Lindau, limiting his rights to a pecuniary indemnity, and the direct result of the suit was that Wagner's name figured alone on play-bill and libretto. Roche, who worked from pure devotion, trusted to his friend for remuneration in case of success; he had no desire to be associated with Lindau's claim, and the latest comer in the collaboration, M. Nuitter, followed Roche's example in keeping in the background, and giving all credit to Richard Wagner, the only true author of the poem and of the score.[1]

So much for the translation of *Tannhäuser* into verse; but Wagner, in his desire to be fully understood by the Parisians, had gone still farther. He had had a translation made of his four great poems, in prose, because of the pressure of time, and of the difficulty in rendering the literal sense into verse; then he had united them into one volume, with a preface in which he undertook to give a summary sketch of his life, and to explain clearly his artistic theories to people who cared very little about them. This *Letter on Music* was a mistake on the part of Richard Wagner, who had, moreover, a mania for autobiography, and who began several, always with the object of making himself known to new hearers, French, American, or others, to whom he submitted his music. In principle, the intention was a good one; in fact, it was without usefulness but not without danger.

He could not have had much knowledge of the French,

[1] Edmond Roche died at thirty-four, on Dec. 16, 1861, from the reaction of the failure of *Tannhäuser*, upon which he had placed his last hope of renown and prosperity. His poems were united in a volume with a preface by M. V. Sardou, who relates with his usual animation the extraordinary *séances* of labor between Roche and Wagner, and deplores the death of a talented friend. As for the collection of Roche's poems, it was with that as with the poet himself, — quite unknown.

amateurs, critics or musicians, to imagine that they would read this preface before going to see *Tannhäuser*, and even if they had read it, they would have been more perplexed than enlightened by it. As Wagner in 1860 had already written *Tristan and Isolde*, and as that poem figured in his book, he instinctively carried the history of his life and of the development of his ideas beyond the point of *Tristan*, without reflecting that he was thereby exceeding his aim, it being simply a question of preparing people to hear *Tannhäuser*. In drawing up this *Letter on Music*, he lost sight of the immediate object of the preface; he wrote less for the unenlightened than for himself, and thereby a very natural misunderstanding arose between the public and the writer. His profession of faith misled everybody; they thought they saw in it a definition of the style of *Tannhäuser*, and they were frightened off; whereas the author had always had in mind while writing it, not *Tannhäuser*, nor even *Lohengrin*, but *Tristan and Isolde*, and *the Ring of the Nibelungen*.

He has said somewhere: "To consider the explanations which I give you as a preparation to the representation of *Tannhäuser*, would be to conceive an expectation very erroneous in some respects." But then why give them? Explanations which explain nothing only have the effect of confusing the mind; and that is what happened in this case, the more so as the article was skimmed over in a very superficial manner. The public did not read it at all, and the journalists who criticised it were struck only by one or two terms which were new to them, such as *infinite melody* and *table music*, in speaking of the Italian opera, and the explanation of which they did not attempt to seek in the context. They even invented an explanation for the term *melody of the forest*, as they had already done for *music of the future*, and upon these few expressions they built the most absurd and fantastic theories, full of jest and satire.

REPRESENTATION OF "TANNHÄUSER," AT THE PARIS OPERA IN 1861.
Final scene of the second act. Original drawing by Alphonse de Neuville.

Followed attentively, it will be seen that this *resumé* of his life and ideas is made with a great deal of care, by an author who, naturally, saw no fault in himself; but it is confused, like all the writings of Richard Wagner, the essential idea being always overloaded with parasitical developments, with comparisons more confusing than the object which he sets out to explain. Far enough from being clear in itself, it seems very obscure to people who know nothing of the subjects discussed, and who hold as worthless any artist presumptuous enough to attack the best established reputations, and to wish to reform dramatic music. And yet in his *Letter on Music* he naïvely remarked: "The work of which I am speaking, and of which the greater part of the musical composition has long since been completed, is entitled *The Ring of the Nibelungen*. If the attempt which I am now making to lay before you my other operatic poems does not discourage you, perhaps I might be disposed to do the same for my Trilogy also!"[1]

Difficulties arose apropos of a ballet. The administrator Alphonse Royer, in his first conversations with Wagner, had not concealed the fact that this was an important element of success, and that the ballet, in his opinion indispensable,

[1] In his *Letter on Music* Wagner twice protests against the foolish interpretation put upon the term *music of the future*. After having explained that each art, according to his ideas, having reached the limit of its power, requires to be united to a companion art, and that perfect art work would result from the fusion of all the individual arts, he recognizes that in the existing state of things, this ideal could not attain a complete realization, and he designates it under the name of *Art Work of the Future*. "Under this title also I published a more detailed essay in which I described more closely the ideas which I had just indicated; and it is to this title, by the bye, that we are entitled to the invention of the spectre of a 'Music of the Future,' which plays its pranks in such a popular fashion even in French publications, and from which it can now be easily understood from what misunderstanding it arose, and with what object it was invented." (*Letter on Music*, to M. F. Villot, translated by M. Challemel-Lacour, at the head of the Four Operatic Poems, translated into French prose. One volume, 18mo, *Librarie Nouvelle*, 1860.)

ought to come in the middle of the second act, for it was not till then that those subscribers to whom the ballet principally belonged entered their boxes. Wagner obstinately refused to interpolate a ballet into the second act, where it would have no meaning; on the contrary he cherished the idea of introducing dances in the Venusberg, and developing this scene in accordance with his new ideas on the drama. This, of course, must only serve to disconcert the singers who already knew the first act, and could in no way benefit the subscribers, since the new scene appeared at the first rising of the curtain. But Wagner adhered strictly to his convictions.

He gave some magnificent developments to the tableau of the Venusburg, for which the interpreters complained bitterly, particularly Mme. Tedesco, forced to learn a new role of Venus; and at which the listeners laughed immoderately, because this portion, differing in character from the rest of the work was written in a style too unfamiliar for the public to accept, even though it had applauded all the rest of the opera; but it is to Wagner's honor to have acted according to his convictions, and not to have heeded the advice of his friends, who tried to dissuade him from making this change, for fear of compromising the success. From every point of view he acted wisely; however, this refusal to put a grand ballet in the accustomed place was sufficient to rouse the fury of the *beaux messieurs* of the clubs, and to decide them to come and hiss *Tannhäuser;* for they were far too much interested in the *corps de ballet* to allow such a matter to pass unheeded.

As the rehearsals proceeded they became more and more stormy.[1] During these long studies Wagner had found on

[1] There were not less than one hundred and sixty-four of them; the general expenses of stage settings, etc., amounted to one hundred thousand francs, plus eight hundred and sixty francs extra outlay for each performance. These figures are taken from the carefully prepared article published by M. Ch. Nuitter in the

the part of the *chefs du chant*, Vauthrot and Croharé, the most intelligent and devoted co-operation; but it was quite otherwise with the leader of the orchestra, who was no other than Dietsch, the same who had set to music with so little success, *The Phantom Ship*, sold by Richard Wagner to Léon Pillet. At the close of the rehearsals, the relations between the author and Dietsch had become most difficult. Wagner much dissatisfied, claimed the privilege of directing the general rehearsal and the first three performances. "I decidedly cannot consent," he wrote to the director, Alphonse Royer, "to have the effect of the unprecedented zeal of so many artists, left to the mercy of an orchestral leader who is incapable, so far as my works are concerned, of directing the final execution." It did not rest with the administrator to decide this question, and Wagner was obliged to address his request to the Minister, who responded by a formal refusal, justified by the customs of the past, and approved, it must be

AT A GENERAL REHEARSAL OF TANNHÄUSER.

"Say! Isn't it allowable to be tired to death at your opera?"

"No, Sir! to die would be to applaud; and I don't want any applause at my performances."

(CHAM, *Charivari*, March 10, 1861.)

Bayreuther Festblätter (1884) and which may be depended upon with all confidence, in regard to *Tannhäuser*. On the contrary, it is necessary to make allowance in reading a very amusing but clever article by M. Paul Lindau, in which, under pretense of being very friendly to Wagner, he tries to demonstrate that he was at fault in everything, and that there existed not even a shadow of cabal. M. Paul Lindau was the brother of Richard Lindau, who had just lost a suit against Wagner, and even though it were not already known, the fashion in which he rallies M. Nuitter's verses, would suffice to show that he was closely related to the discharged translator.

confessed, by all the musicians of the orchestra and of the choruses, who saw an opportunity to avenge themselves for the demands and bad compliments of Wagner, by praising to the skies a leader whom they secretly decried.

However that may be, there is in the response of the Minister of State, Count Walewski, a phrase to be preserved as a model of administrative style: "Never in France, be it a question of the works of our own composers or of those of foreign masters, like Rossini or Meyerbeer, has a director of the orchestra been disinherited of his right to remain at the head of his phalanx of performers. *Furthermore, with our French ideas and habits, the leader of an orchestra who would yield up his place at these solemn and decisive moments, would be considered as deserting his duties, and would lose for the future all the prestige of his authority.*" And the rehearsals went on from bad to worse, the leader of the orchestra at his desk, beating time, and the composer seated on the stage a few steps away, beating his own time, with hand and foot, and furiously striking the floor of the theatre, enveloped in a cloud of dust.

It was under these unfavorable conditions that the first performance was given, on Wednesday, March 13, 1861. In a few months Wagner had alienated from himself everybody at the Opera; director, leader, orchestra and *corps de ballet*, even the salaried *claqueurs*, whom his artistic honesty impelled him to banish, but who had been forced upon him in spite of himself; to say nothing of the showers of jokes and caricatures which this unheard-of resolution brought down upon him. "Meanwhile," writes M. Nuitter, who has left us the best account of this performance, "notwithstanding all the rumors of the systematic opposition of a part of the spectators, no one could conjecture how the affair would turn out. The first tableau, although it was written quite in Wagner's latest style, passed without opposition, but when after the change of

scene, the strains of the little shepherd were heard, playing upon his pipe, the first murmur of discontent arose. Wagner, who sat in the director's box, as yet quite innocent of the meaning of this demonstration, leaned forward in order to command a better view of the audience-room, and remarked to his collaborator who sat beside him: "It is the arrival of

RICHARD WAGNER IN 1861.
After a lithograph by Desmaisons.

the emperor." Alas no! It was the first sign of rebellion from the leaders of the opposition.

In the *entr'acte* a bright idea for amusing themselves crossed the minds of these individuals; most of the subscribers, members of the Jockey-Club or of the *Cercle Impérial*, went out and bought up all the hunting-whistles they could find in

a certain gunsmith's shop in the *passage de l'Opera*, and the disturbance recommenced with the second act, increasing to the very end of the performance, save during the march with the chorus, when the whistlers had to subside. It must be said that in this uproar, the chevaliers of the *corps de ballet* had been sustained by the personal enemies of the master — he always excelled in creating them — while the impartial spectators, indignant at such pre-conceived hostility, and at such a scandalous outrage, joined their bravos, often very warm ones, to those of Wagner's friends.

For an instant it seemed as if the victory would remain to the defenders; but the finale to the second act, encumbered with harps and troubadours, brought irrevocable defeat; of the third, nothing could be distinguished, and the recitative of the pilgrimage to Rome, in particular, the real climax to the whole work, was drowned from beginning to end in furious yells. The interpreters, however, did not give way before these hostile demonstrations, and at least two distinguished people in the room bravely defended the author: Mme. von Metternich, who seemed to wish to be revenged on Solferino; and the emperor, who on several occasions gave the signal for applause.

Wagner, moreover, seems to have clearly seen through the whole affair, and in an account of the battle, which he gives to his friends in Germany, on March 26, he indicates an appreciative recognition of the Parisian public taken *en masse*. "It seems to me that you have thus far been misinformed with regard to the nature of this reception; certainly you would be greatly mistaken if you were to derive from it an opinion of the French public, which, though it might be flattering to the German public, would be really very unjust. I persist, on the contrary, in attributing to the Parisian public very agreeable characteristics, especially a very lively receptiveness, and a really magnanimous sense of justice. To see an audience

(I speak of the audience taken in its *ensemble*) to whom I am personally quite a stranger, who have daily heard the most absurd things about me through the newspapers and idle chatterers, and who have been influenced against me with almost unprecedented efforts, — to see such an audience declare itself in my favor, and against a clique, by repeated and earnest demonstrations of applause, for a whole quarter of an hour at a time — would fill my heart with joy were I the most indifferent of men."

The second representation, announced for March 15, was postponed until Monday the 18th, in consequence of an indisposition of M. Niemann, and the director profited by this delay to demand fresh sacrifices from the author; he had already obtained from him permission to suppress part of the role of Venus in the first scene, the hunting horns and the dogs in the final scene of the first act,[1] the *ritornello* of the little shepherd, the violin passage which terminates the second act, and the return of Venus in the third; all happy cuts, but insufficient to satisfy the director. "I would have you observe," writes he to the minister on March 17, "that it is very difficult to get a man so convinced of his own merit as is M. Wagner, to cut out any portion of his work. Those who know him are amazed at what I have already obtained, although that, I repeat it, is not sufficient. If it were a question of a recited piece I would cut it out on my own authority, notwithstanding the expostulations of the author; but in a score, all curtailment necessitates an agreement of tonalities which I cannot take the responsibility of making."

The second representation, during which the Emperor

[1] These poor dogs, which had roused the sympathy of the sensitive spectators and served as pretext for the most spirited jests, a short time afterwards contributed largely to the success of a great drama; — *la jeunesse du roi Henri*, by Lambert Thiboust and Ponson du Terrail, represented in 1864 at the Châtelet theatre; the authors had simply made use of Wagner's idea, and had only to congratulate themselves for it.

Monsieur le Directeur

C'est probablement par un malentendu qu'on n'a pas encore fait droit à ma demande de cent (100) entrées pour la répétition générale de demain. Jusqu'ici, si la salle a été trop encombrée aux dernières répétitions, ce n'est point de ma faute. Pour celle d'hier par exemple j'ai même refusé à ma femme la faveur de m'y accompagner, pour que la répétition eût le caractère le plus intime. J'ai été fort étonné alors de voir la salle remplie d'individus qui m'étaient parfaitement inconnus. Je crois être dans mon droit, en vous demandant, Monsieur, de m'envoyer ~~le~~ plus tôt — préalablement — aux parterre, pour placer mes amis, que jusqu'ici j'ai discrètement ménagés à cette répétition générale. En outre je vous prie, Monsieur de satisfaire aux demandes des ministres étrangers pour loges et stalles à cette même répétition de demain soir.

Agréez mes civilités empressées.

Richard Wagner

AUTOGRAPH LETTER FROM WAGNER TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE OPERA.
Dated March 1, 1869. (Opera Archives.)

and Empress joined more than once in the applause of the partisans, confirmed Wagner's judgment of the public, who themselves cried "*A bas les Jockeys!*" in order to impose silence on the disturbers. It was an intrigue so well conceived and carried out by signal, that at this performance the whole of the first act and half of the second passed without other interruption than that of warm applause in several places; then at the close of the scene of the tourney of singers, as if upon word of command, whistles and pipes were started up, and the hostile manifestations became even more violent than on the first evening, so fearful were these leaders of having left the saving breath of life in the enemy. In view of the animosity of an all-powerful club, who held the Minister himself in a state of submission, it was agreed that the third representation should be given on Sunday, in order to get rid of the presence of the subscribers; and this took place on the 24th, before a full house, as is proven by the receipts.[1]

But the subscribers, whom they wished to keep out, did not see the matter in this light, and rather than run the risk of allowing *Tannhäuser* to make the least headway before an impartial public, they had come *en masse*, they, whose custom was never to show themselves at the Opera on Sunday. This time it was impossible to deal with a cabal so desperate. "Astounded as I was at the unbridled conduct of these gentlemen," says Wagner, "I was still more impressed and touched by the efforts of the true audience to secure justice to me; never have I been in the least disposed to doubt the Parisian public, whenever it is upon an impartial ground." And this, let us not forget, was written the second day after the third representation.

It had been rumored, without being officially announced,

[1] Receipts from the three representations of *Tannhäuser:* first, 7,491 francs (of which 2,790 were subscribed); second, 8,415 francs (subscription 2,758); third, 10,764 francs (subscription 230 francs). (From article by M. Ch. Nuitter).

that this performance on Sunday would be the last. A strong effort was made to have a fourth given, in order that the Friday subscribers, who alone had not heard *Tannhäuser*, might be entertained in their turn, but Wagner opposed the project so violently, that the Minister consented to the withdrawal of the work.

"Since the members of the Jockey Club are not willing to permit the public of Paris to hear my opera performed on the stage of the Imperial Academy of Music, because they cannot see a ballet danced at the usual hour of their entrance at the theatre, I withdraw my score, and I beg you to communicate to His Excellency the Minister of State my resolution, through which I hope to relieve him of a serious embarrassment."

That was a private note; the official letter ran thus: "The opposition which is manifested against *Tannhäuser* proves to me how right you were in your observations to me at the outset, in regard to the ballet and other scenic conditions to which the subscribers of the Opera are accustomed. I regret that the nature of my work has prevented me from conforming to these exigencies. Now that the violence of the opposition which is made to me does not even allow those who would like to hear it, to give the attention necessary in order to appreciate it, I have no other honorable resource than to withdraw it. I beg you to make this decision known to His Excellency, M. the Minister of State." This was falling proudly — almost a victor.[1]

This whole affair of *Tannhäuser*, from whatever point of

[1] This withdrawal of *Tannhäuser* was a real disappointment for the amateurs and the curious; in Paris everybody had the *Tannhäuser* mania, and the advance receipts were enormous. Once the piece was withdrawn, people went in crowds wherever a fragment from Wagner was to be heard, — at the Casino, where Arban had the *Tannhäuser* march executed, and the betrothal march from *Lohengrin*; at the Opera-Comique, where Roger sung in *concert spirituel* the recitative of the pilgrimage to Rome, etc., etc. And adversaries and partisans hissed and applauded, vigorously and blindly.

view it is examined, is very little to our credit. But what is even more sad than this infernal uproar organized by a company of jovial fellows after drinking, and before supper, is the attitude of the press, which was not dependent on the *corps de ballet*, and actually believed itself in the presence of an execrable work and of a second-rate composer. In their ignorance the newspapers vied with each other in scattering abuse and insult, and for many weeks after the composer had left Paris, they attacked the work and derided the man with an unprecedented fury.

"I have sold my score."
"To the music-dealer?"
"No, to the druggist."
"As an opiate; that is quite proper."
(Cham, *Charivari*, April 7, 1861.)

Probably the blindness of criticism taken *en masse*, and its weakness towards the public, which guided it instead of being guided by it, had never shown up in a more glaring fashion. There were some hundreds of articles in which the artist and his work were abused, simply because it was the fashion, and the worst of it was that all these judges had not the first idea of the thing they were judging; in their eyes the author was a scapegrace, his work rubbish, and the sentence which they rendered must be without appeal.

Many of these have died without seeing their judgments cast aside, in even so short a time; but among those who survive, and who were the most violent at the outset, it is amusing to see how some of them manœuvre to turn with the tide of fashion, and cast the shades of oblivion over their past lucubrations, while others, more courageous, struggle desperately and cry all the louder as they feel the ground sinking beneath them. It would be tiresome to wade through all

these articles, of which moreover, Gasperini has detached characteristic passages; it will suffice to quote one, forgotten in his nomenclature, one of the least violent, and signed by a writer who was at that time classed among the masters of criticism.

"To give without circumlocution our opinion on the opera of Richard Wagner: the overture and the march of the second act excepted, his score is but a musical chaos. The sounds jostle each other, pile themselves up and intermingle like immense clouds in a dull sky. Now it is an opaque and heavy obscurity — what Wagner calls the *infinite melody*, no doubt — which overpowers the strongest attention; now it is a discordant din which can only be compared to the most violent tumult of tempests. The voices and the orchestra, the winds and the sea, struggle to see which shall make the most noise. If perchance a ray of light pierces the darkness, if the ghost of a melodious idea is outlined against this deep shadow, the musician lets loose his orchestra after the manner of Æolus exciting the winds, and does not rest until the nebulous mass has piled up and quite effaced it. M. Wagner purposely interdicts what the musicians of all times have sought after as the very essense of their art — rhythm, melody, clearness. His music, like that of the Corybantes, who surrounded the caves of the orgiastic Mysteries, seems to have no purpose but to terrify and drive away outsiders. 'He has eaten of the drum and drunk of the cymbal!' cried the Hierophantes of these orgies, in order to designate the Initiated who had passed through the terrible ordeal. 'If I know what I eat, I dismiss you,' said an epicure to his cook. In brief, this is like the music of Wagner. In order to reveal his secrets he imposes tortures on the mind which algebra alone should inflict. The unintelligible is his ideal."

Paul de Saint-Victor, the author of this sheer nonsense,

presuming to reproach anybody with being unintelligible![1] Is it not droll enough?

"The less said about the causes of this failure, the better," writes Wagner; "but it was a disaster for me. Everybody interested had been paid by me; my part was to consist of the customary honorarium after each representation, and this resource was abruptly cut off. So I quitted Paris with a load of debts, not knowing which way to turn; and yet outside of these unpleasantnesses the recollection of this trying year is not altogether disagreeable to me." He suffered a greater loss at the sudden interruption of *Tannhäuser*, since, in order to remunerate the two translators, he had given up to them half of his rights on the first twenty performances, and it was not until the twenty-first that he was to receive for himself alone the total sum of five hundred francs, fixed at that time to cover all rights of the author at the Opera. These three performances then, brought him only seven hundred and fifty francs, and three hundred and seventy-five francs to each of the two translators.

Berlioz was in a transport of joy. He had preserved silence in the *Débats*, but he made up for it in society. What cries of triumph when he saw his enemy down! "Ah! What a representation! What bursts of laughter! The Parisian showed himself yesterday in quite a new light; he laughed at the wretched musical style; he laughed at the tricks of a fantastic orchestration, he laughed at the *naïvetés* of a hautboy; at last he comprehends that there is a style in music. As for the horrors, he hissed them splendidly." And a week

[1] There were few enough critics who defended Richard Wagner, or who were content to criticise him seriously, instead of loading him with ridicule; but among the few should be named Baudelaire of the *Revue Européenne*, Franck-Marie of *La Patrie*, Weber of the *Temps*, and Ortigue of the *Débats*, taking Berlioz's place for a day, and who while rejecting the ideas set forth in the *Letter on Music*, recognized in Wagner an artist with convictions, and combatted him without acrimony.

later, in writing to his son, he says: "The second representation was worse than the first. People no longer laughed, they were furious; they hissed persistently, notwithstanding the presence of the Emperor and Empress, who were in their box. The Emperor is amusing himself. When leaving the theatre, on the stairs, people treat this unfortunate Wagner as a scamp, an imposter, an idiot. If they continue, one of these days the performance cannot be finished, and all will be over. The press is unanimous against it. As for me, I am cruelly revenged!!!" Poor Berlioz!

In the month of June, 1861, Wagner was again in Paris. At that time he left the *rue d'Aumale* to go and lodge with the Minister of Prussia, Count de Pourtalès, but he left France almost immediately, and this time he was able to go in peace to his own country, instead of wandering in exile. Some time before, — about the middle of the year 1860 — the intercession of the grand duke of Baden had obtained from the government permission for Richard Wagner to reside in any of the States of the Confederation except the territory of Saxony, which was still interdicted.[1]

Wagner in speaking of his first sojourn in our midst, has remarked, "Paris has been of the greatest help to me, for Germany." A correct observation, and the accuracy of which is still more striking after the second sojourn, for the infuriated whistlers of Paris did more for his glory and renown, than a success similar to those which came to him in Germany could ever have done. In thinking to bury him they had borne him to the highest pinnacle; thus goes the world sometimes — and all is well.

[1] In the month of October, 1851, the King of Saxony had commuted the long imprisonment which Wagner escaped only by flight, to banishment from entire Germany. In 1860, it was only the Saxon kingdom which was closed to him; finally in March 1862, he was even permitted to enter Saxony — after thirteen years of exile.

CHAPTER IX

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE AT MUNICH

ICHARD Wagner, in returning to Germany, was possessed always of the same fixed idea: to bring about an execution of *Tristan and Isolde*. He was in such haste to hear this work, into which he had put his whole being, — poet and musician, philosopher and reformer, — that it was a radical impossibility to dissuade him from his wild plan of renting the Ventadour theatre, and mounting his work there at his own risk and peril. But he thought that it ought to walk alone in Germany; a sad mistake! In fact, the three years which intervened between his return from France and his call to Munich, were perhaps the most trying of his whole life. He had but one thought, and all his efforts to realize it seemed to be struck powerless. His first disappointment was from the Grand Duke of Baden, who did not flatly refuse to have *Tristan and Isolde* played for his anniversary, but who never spoke of it again. At Vienna they had agreed to mount it; but after fifty-seven rehearsals, the flagrant inadequacy of the tenor Ander forced them to renounce it. At Carlsruhe, at Prague, at Weimar, they did not get so far as to rehearse it; they refused it on sight.

At this point Wagner was at the end of his resources, and in order to sustain a precarious existence, he was obliged to organize a series of concerts, at which he conducted princi-

pally the symphonies of Beethoven, and some fragments from the *Meistersinger* and the *Nibelungen*.[1]

From December 1862 to December 1863, he travelled about directing festivals of this kind at Leipsic, at Vienna, at Prague, at St. Petersburg, at Moscow, at Pesth, at Breslau, and again at Vienna, where he gave several concerts at the theatre *An der Wien*, and where he astonished his audience by an execution, quite in the true spirit, of *Der Freischütz*. He himself has summed up in a few words this Wandering-Jew life of music. "This curious concert," says he, referring to that at Leipsic, where the room was half empty, "was the first of a long series of similar absurd undertakings, to which poverty reduced me. In other cities, at least, people came in good numbers, and I bore away a real artistic success; but it was only in Russia that the pecuniary results were worth talking about." These concerts, on the whole, had done much for his reputation and everywhere people flocked to see him; but he was no nearer the longed-for execution of *Tristan and Isolde*.

[1] A few words of explanation in regard to the pecuniary returns will not be out of place here. In Germany, the customary honorarium for the first performance of a work varied from $40 to $240, according to the rank and importance of the theater. For subsequent performances, the author's share consisted of a small sum agreed upon in advance, and a small percentage of the receipts, usually five, sometimes seven, never more than ten per cent. As most of the German towns had a a theatre, an opera successful in its first tour might bring in a considerable sum, but after that the returns quickly diminished; they could not play the same piece very long in a court or town theatre, where the prices are always very low, and where the system of subscriptions tends to reduce the number of performances of a work. "My operas were to be heard right and left, but I could not live on the proceeds. At Dresden *Tannhäuser* and *The Flying Dutchman* had grown into favor, yet I was told that I had no claim with regard to them, since they were produced during my capellmeistership, and a hof-capellmeister in Saxony is bound to furnish an opera once a year! When the Dresden people wanted *Tristan*, I refused to let them have it unless they agreed to pay for *Tannhäuser*. Accordingly they thought they could dispense with *Tristan*. Aferwards when the public insisted on *Die Meistersinger* I got the better of them." (Groves' Dictionary of Music, p. 146.)

After this successful trip through Russia, where the Grand Duchess Helen, a passionate devotee to music, had testified her admiration of this "*Messie du laid*," as Fétis says, with quite a royal magnificence, Wagner took up his abode in Vienna, where he foolishly squandered all the profits of his tour in the North, about thirty-five thousand roubles, which represented at that time more than twenty thousand dollars. He had fancied that he would never come to the end of this fortune, and he had given free course to his love for ostentatious display; they tell of a sofa hung with silk richly embroidered, and for which he paid three thousand florins, more than $1,200. In the front of one of the principal shops of Vienna are shown some magnificent tapestries, which Wagner ordered to be made expressly for his villa in Switzerland; in less than no time the thirty-five thousand roubles were swallowed up. About this time, and when he was practically penniless, some thieves entered his house, and finding very meagre spoils, carried off a rich snuff-box which he had received at the hands of the Grand Duchess, and on which he probably counted on subsisting for some time. This was considered a pretty good joke, and several newspapers in relating the theft added facetiously, "As to the MSS. of *Tristan* and of the *Nibelungen*, the thieves never touched them."

The legend of *Tristan and Isolde*, so famous in the Middle Ages, is of Celtic origin, and consequently French in its essence. We meet it for the first time in literary form, in a romance written in the XII. century, in Norman prose, by *Luc de Gast*. From France it passed rapidly into Germany, where in 1210 Gottfried of Strasburg made of it a chivalric epopee, from which Richard Wagner borrowed the main idea of his drama, subjecting it to the modifications necessary for adaptation to the stage, and above all, introducing the philosophic theories of which his head was full. In the state of unhappy isolation and absolute discouragement in which he

found himself during his exile, his mind, naturally prone to philosophic speculation, and especially imbued at that time with the pantheistic doctrines of Hegel and of Schelling, was quite carried away by the theories of Schopenhauer, which are no other than the religious ideas of the Hindoos, of the Nirvana, — distaste for life and a horror of the dazzling day; aspiration for the calm night, kindly death, annihilation.

"Like Schopenhauer," writes Gasperini, in his interesting article, "Wagner thought to find refuge from the agitations of an uncertain and tumultuous world, in this supreme indifference which India extols. It was to this quarter that he now turned; it was of Buddhism that he demanded the appeasement of his soul; it was in renouncing the fight, in giving himself up entirely to the new faith, that he hoped to keep himself forevermore from terrestial disenchantments, from the violent disappointments which had overthrown him. By a strange contradiction, the causes for which it would take too long to trace, this Buddhism which preaches extinction and annihilation, proclaims and glorifies the unlimited power of the will. With this sentiment at least, Wagner found himself in harmony, and felt himself breathe in the midst of this deep night, this dull torpor which had overpowered him."[1]

That Richard Wagner should have drawn from the most discouraging of philosophic theories, the courage and will necessary to raise himself from the despondency of exile, is sufficiently strange; but that he should go so far as to make his heroes, two lovers like Isolde and Tristan, the interpreters of the philosophic school then working upon his own mind, and that in the guise of a love-song he should make them launch imprecations at the perverse and deceitful day, at all the falsities of the light, glory, honor, beauty; that he should make them aspire to darkness, to the eternal repose of death,

[1] The *New Musical Germany: Richard Wagner*, by A. de Gasperini, p. 145.

to nothingness; that the supreme burst of love from Tristan should be, "It is I who am the world," as Schopenhauer had said in more abstract terms, "The world is my representation" — this is what shows a mind singularly disturbed by philosophic reveries, and turned aside from the healthy dramatic and musical conception.

Meanwhile, *Tristan and Isolde* had never seen the light, and it had come to be a by-word with everybody. At the close of the year 1863, the management of the Court theatre at Dresden had begun talking about engaging Richard Wagner as orchestral leader. They finally agreed to all his conditions, however exorbitant, — six thousand francs pension for life, an apartment at the grand-ducal castle, box at the theatre, Court equipage at his disposal, etc., etc.; they were about to conclude the bargain, when to all these clauses he added the performance, at a very early day, of *Tristan and Isolde;* this was the last straw, and the conferences dissolved.

SKATING SCENE.

"Look out there! If you carry your head so high you will fall into the hole."
(*Punsch* of Munich, Feb. 19, 1865.)

Tired out and discouraged by so many fruitless efforts, Wagner was about to beat a final retreat into Switzerland, when the death of Maximilian II. of Bavaria, brought to the throne, in March, 1864, a young prince nineteen years of age, visionary and mystic, carried away by the theories on dramatic and national art so often set forth by Richard Wagner, and by the Opera of *Lohengrin*, which he had heard in his sixteenth year; and who, a year before coming to the throne, had thought he had perceived a message from Heaven in the last lines of a supreme appeal of Richard Wagner to his friends.

This article was dated Vienna, April, 1863, and serves as the preface to the final text of the *Ring of the Nibelungen*. In it, Wagner again takes up and enlarges upon the plan outlined in the *Communication to my Friends*, and addresses to them a last appeal for the realization of his art work, for the building of a special theatre with invisible orchestra, formal representations at regular intervals, etc. "I am preparing," said he, "an important event, and one full of consequences, when I seek to procure the means necessary for the first representation of the *grand serious drama* (Bühnenfestspiel). As I possess the experience necessary to insure the success of the artistic part, it only remains now to provide material means. Two ways present themselves to me. An association of rich amateurs of both sexes, to furnish such sums as may be necessary for the production of my work; but when I reflect how many Germans have little enthusiasm for such appeals for funds, this first mode of procedure does not offer me much hope. On the other hand, it would be very easy for a German prince, without increasing his budget, and by a simple act of transfer, to apply to my enterprises the funds designed for the maintaining of such detestable institutions as the present Opera theatres, which so sadly pervert the German musical taste. And if the theatre-mad amateurs should demand daily performances, the prince of my dreams would leave to their charge the expenses entailed; for in taking them upon himself, it is neither music nor the drama which he is protecting, but the Opera, that is to say, a machine which outrages in the gravest manner both the drama and the German musical sense. If I should succeed in forming the conviction of this prince, the sums set apart each year for the Opera would go to the benefit of the *grand serious drama*, of which representations would take place every year, or at longer intervals, according to the resources. In this way an institution would be founded of infinite importance in the

development of art in Germany, and the formation of a truly and purely national spirit. This prince will thus assure to his name an imperishable glory. Will such a prince be found?"

Such a prince will be found, and later on, will form also the desired association of rich amateurs; for it actually happened that Wagner, then so hopeless, and who added with a doleful resignation "I no longer cherish the hope of living to witness the execution of my work, and long merely to have strength enough to finish the musical composition," had the good fortune to see his double aim realized. The first act of the young king Ludwig II. on mounting to the throne, was to send his private secretary to Vienna to deliver to Wagner this simple message "Come here and finish your work." But Wagner, at his wit's end, had just left Vienna, and was fleeing from creditors sufficiently wrought up to pursue him. He had directed his steps towards Zurich, passing through Munich; then had turned aside at Stuttgart, where his friend Eckert, leader of the orchestra, offered him a safe refuge. The messenger followed him from one halting place to another, and at last discovered his retreat; this messenger of fortune was to Wagner a visitant straight from Heaven; after the interview, he embraced the faithful Eckert, crying, "I believed everything to be lost, and see how everything is saved! All my hopes are realized. The king puts at my disposal everything he possesses!"

A short time after, Richard Wagner arrived at Munich and fell into the arms of his protector, who installed him not far from the royal residence of Starnberg, and assured him a pension of five hundred dollars from his private purse; this was only a beginning. "My creditors were quieted," wrote Wagner in 1877, "I was able to go on with my work, and the confidence of that noble young man made me happy. Since then I have had many annoyances which were not of his making, nor of mine, but in spite of these annoyances, I am

now free again, thanks to him." At the coming on of winter, when the king returned to Munich, he placed at his favorite's disposition a little house opposite the Propylæum, at the end of the city, and considerably increased his pension.

It was then that Wagner, sovereign master in Bavaria, and more king than the king himself, wrote by way of rendering homage to his protector, his *Huldigungs Marsch*, before resuming the composition of his long-neglected *Nibelungen*. At the request of the king he drew up an essay on *The State and Religion;* he elaborated the statutes of a school of song, similar to that which he had formerly dreamed of establishing at Dresden, and in July 1865 the king closed the old Conservatory, and appointed a commission for considering the project of establishing a school on a new plan; but these propositions had no appreciable results, owing to the ill-will of Franz Lachner and other musicians at Munich, and also for lack of pecuniary resources.[1]

Moreover Wagner called to Munich, Gottfried Semper, whom the king wished to consult about building, according to the instructions of the master, a theatre adapted to the *Nibelungen* representations; finally, he engaged, expressly for the parts of Tristan and Isolde, Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld and his wife, indemnifying their director at Dresden; he sent for his beloved disciple, Hans von Bülow, upon whom was conferred the title of pianist to the king of Bavaria, and under these conditions he consented to have *Tristan and*

[1] The 8th of October 1865, the *Gazette Musicale* of Paris, received and published the following notice from Munich: "The direction of our Conservatory, reorganized after the plan — considerably modified — of Richard Wagner, has been confided to M. de Perfall. The classes will reopen in the month of November. On the 3rd of the same month will be inaugurated the new *People's Theatre*, built on shares." Apropos of these innovations, a satirical journal of Munich wrote: "The rumor is abroad that in the new school of song, steam will be employed for the emission of sound; the report does not appear to be confirmed."

Isolde put through a course of rehearsals. In the meantime, in order that his royal master should not lose patience, he had *Tannhäuser* played again, and mounted *The Flying Dutchman* (December 4, 1864) which had not yet been heard at Munich. He recalled, in this connection the judgment of Küstner, who, twenty-four years before had refused this work sent from Paris, on the ground that it was "little suited to the German taste." Finally, he organized concerts, composed exclusively of his own works; he arranged one for December 11, the object of which was to give his protector a foretaste of his new creations, such as *Tristan and Isolde* and The *Meistersinger;* but the people of Munich, who were beginning to entertain a sentiment of dissatisfaction towards their king, left him to his own enjoyment in the great almost empty theatre, and Wagner's friends and followers, by way of consoling themselves for this hostility, went about declaring "that the ground was not yet sufficiently prepared."

Meanwhile the first performance of *Tristan and Isolde* was close at hand, and all the artists, from M. and Mme. Schnorr (Tristan and Isolde)[1] to Mme. Deinet (Brangäne) Mitterwurzer, Gottmayer, and Heinrich (the King Marke, Kurwenal and Melot) vied with each other in penetrating and faithfully interpreting the master's ideas. The announcement of this festival had attracted to Munich large numbers of people from all parts of Germany and of Europe; but the author, profiting from his experience with *Tannhäuser*, had

[1] In regard to these two exceptional artists, it would seem as if such a complete identification of actors with their characters, was never seen; in certain places, one almost feared to see them succumb to their almost superhuman emotions. Richard Wagner paid to Schnorr a just tribute of homage and regret, when a malignant fever carried off the artist, soon after the performances of *Tristan and Isolde*, July 21, 1865. The opera was again consigned to oblivion, and was not heard for four years, when M. and Mme. Vogl sung it with great success at Munich, in June 1869. See the chapter entitled: *My Recollections of Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld*, in the *Souvenirs of Wagner*, p. 187.

taken precautions to keep out all individuals suspected of opposition. Far from concealing his purpose, he issued a public letter, inviting his friends in all parts of the world to witness these *model* performances, as he himself styled them, which were reserved for adepts alone; it will be seen later if there was occasion to admit the masses to enjoy "what is most elevating, most profound in art."

This *Invitation to my Friends*, to witness the first performance of *Tristan*, published in April 1865 in the *Vienna Messenger*, — a very peculiar letter, and one which nobody else could have written — led off with a burst of grateful recognition of Ludwig II.: "when I was abandoned by all, a noble heart beat only the more warmly for the ideal of *my* art. It was he who cried to the despairing artist, 'What you create, that is my will!' and this time the will was all-powerful, for it was the will of a king." He proceeds to speak of many things apropos of this *action* in three acts — this word he substitutes for that of *opera* — reverts to the time of his sojourn in Paris, and congratulates himself upon the failure of *Tannhäuser;* very different language from that which he afterwards employs in his conversation with Mme. Judith Gautier, and in his letter to M. Monod.[1]

The first representation, already announced on the bills for May 15, 1865, was carried over to June 10, owing to a bad hoarseness of Mme. Schnorr, and the hostility against Wagner had made such headway, that he was held responsible for this difficulty; he was also reproached for having taken away a whole row of stalls, in order to increase the orchestra,

[1] Later, the German newspapers valued at 80,000 florins the sum expended in mounting *Lohengrin*, and at a still greater figure, the expenses of *Tristan and Isolde*, without including the different presents in money and in kind, which brought the total up to 250,000 florins. The Cologne Journal, in particular, announced one day that the king was going to present to his favorite musician a cane, the head of which was a gold swan, chased and enriched with brilliants worth several thousands of ducats.

and, on the 29th of May, a small popular theatre which had prepared a parody on *Tristan*, got tired of waiting, and actually launched the parody before the appearance of the regular opera. It was under these untoward circumstances that *Tristan* first saw the day; there were in all four performances, all four admirably directed by Hans von Bülow, and all four received with a frenzy of enthusiasm; at the first two, it was the king himself who gave, after each act, the signal for applause.[1]

The echo of these bravos reached even to France, where it created only merriment. The palm for sarcastic comment fell to M. Blaze de Bury, who made a great show of wit, both against the work, and against the "Invitation to my friends," a sort of encyclical letter addressed to the Wagnerian world, which had served as a preface to the performances at Munich. "Happy Bavaria! Bavaria felix! She had painting and statuary, she had Cornelius, Kaulbach and Schwanthaler; but Gluck was still wanting to complete her good fortune; he was given to her. Let us respect the generous illusions, and let us never reproach a sovereign for excess of zeal in such a cause; it is better to take Richard Wagner for a Gluck and for an Æschylus, than to know neither Gluck nor Æschylus, which is sometimes the case with powerful monarchs . . . In the main all this idle twaddle of a personality intoxicated with itself, does not concern us much, and yet it is something too droll to be passed over without remark. Speaking of his campaign in France and of one whole *long year* of his existence foolishly *frittered away* on this occasion, Wagner takes up the question of *Tannhäuser* at the Opera, and so far

[1] The Munich Theatre, compared to the Vaudeville of Paris, was rather poorly lighted, and gloomy in its aspect. On the first floor, facing the stage, and flanked by two caryatids, was the royal box lighted by a small chandelier; above the curtain, in the place of the arms or emblems used by us, a clock perfectly indicated the hour; finally, the leader was placed in the middle of his orchestra instead of near the footlights, and directed while standing up.

REPRESENTATION OF "TRISTAN AND ISOLDE," AT MUNICH, IN 1865.

Final scene of the first act. After an engraving of the time.

from complaining of his misfortune, so far from deploring the catastrophe, he questions, with irony and bitterness on his lips, if it be not better after all, that things happened thus, 'for, said he, if a grand success had been possible, I really *would not have known what to do with it*.' It is the story of the player, who, not winning, preferred to lose. To succeed in Paris, in this capital of the empire of the Iroquois, just reflect, what an embarrassment! If Wagner, this great grumbler, knew not what to do with success, at least those who have read his *Letter to a Friend* know what use can be made of it. 'The performances, three of which are completely guaranteed, will be quite outside all ordinary customs, and will be *model representations*.' Impossible to explain oneself more clearly to the public which one addresses. He admitted, then, that in these three famous performances, all would take place among friends *en famille*. It is not sufficiently borne in mind how much can be done for the glory of a single great man by two hundred friends, duly grouped, and who manœuvre under the indefatigable direction of eight or ten journalists playing on fife and drum. They are scarcely two hundred, and you would think that they were ten thousand. Witness at the Châtelet theatre the magnificent defiles which they obtain with a few supernumeraries passing and repassing, ever the same individuals. It is thus with the success of *Tristan and Isolde*. The room is never empty, and what bravos, what cheering, what stamping! Above all, what recalls! But of all this phantasmagoria, what remains after a few days? That which remains of a sky-rocket after it has been fired. A little stir, exchange of gossip, an uproar, and all is over! *Tristan and Isolde* at Munich or *Tannhäuser* at Paris, two *soirées* which, each after its own kind, may indeed be reckoned as model representations!"[1]

It was no small matter, it must be confessed, even for an

[1] *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, July 1, 1865.

audience prepared, and selected from among the best, like that of Munich, to listen thus to three long acts, during which there is not the slightest opportunity for applause, nor even for taking breath; where everything is so woven together that the ear can not detect a single connecting point in this uninterrupted symphony, above which the characters sing their parts with a superb intensity of expression, and without once repeating themselves, more than would be done in a spoken drama. It need not be thought, however, that this non-repetition of the words is prejudicial to the symphonic development of the musical idea; on the contrary, it aids and emphasizes its power. Nevertheless, the author in giving as a key to his entire work, an exquisite and impassioned phrase upon which is built the prelude, establishes beforehand a secret current which stirs his listeners, and acquaints them with the generative idea of the drama. One should witness what enthusiastic bravos greet, among other fine points, the magnificent coronation of the first act, that brilliant conclusion towards which one feels himself borne by the superior force of genius which steadily increases its magnetic power throughout the entire act; there is in this act an unheard-of effect of the accumulation of musical electricity, which cannot be understood except by actually experiencing the shock.

This intimate fusion of poem and music, or, to express it better, this simultaneity of conception involving a single creative idea and the double musical and poetic faculty in the same brain, is one of the points to which Wagner clings the closest. "In *Tristan*," says he, "the musical execution no longer offers an empty repetition of words; the poetic tissue has all the expanse intended for the melody; in a word, the melody is already poetically constructed." The musical form being thus preconceived in the poem, and having a particular value given to it, which responds exactly to the poetical aim, it remains to be seen if the invention of the

melody will lose nothing of the freedom necessary to its development.

And Wagner, the instant that this question is raised, replies to it with absolute conviction. "On the contrary, this treatment of melody and its form admits of an inexhaustible richness of development, and one of which no idea could be formed before having tried it." This statement is fully borne out by facts, for a single hearing of his work fills one with amazement, not only at the genius of the composer, but at the power and lucidity of mind of the man who has conceived this "art work" as he calls it. After hearing *Tristan*, one is at a loss which to admire most in Wagner, the conception or the execution; in any case it is the wonderful genius, which challenges admiration in whatever form it may appear.

In Richard Wagner's own opinion, *Tristan* and *Isolde* was the most faithful, the most living expression of his theoretic ideas. Notwithstanding their great worth, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* are but admirable creations of a genius, ignorant as yet of the prodigious height which it will be given him to attain. "It will be admitted," said he, "that I have made a greater step from *Tannhäuser* to *Tristan*, than in passing from my first point of view, that of the ordinary opera, to *Tannhäuser*. In *Tristan* at last, his ideal is clearly set forth, and the new art, of which he has made himself the founder and the apostle, being inspired, as he says, by the greatest masters, takes upon himself an authority which suffers no compromise.

Wagner has written somewhere that *Tristan* might be judged after the most rigorous laws which proceed from his theoretic affirmations, but he declares that in composing it he was freed from all speculative fancy, and that he felt, as he proceeded in his work, how much this freedom was doing to make clear his written system. He adds, with a shadow

of regret, "There is no happiness superior to that perfect spontaneity of the artist in the creation, and I have known it in composing my *Tristan*." One may well believe that he felt the same in completing *The Nibelungen Ring*, interrupted for *Tristan*, and in writing the *Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*.

Tristan, the child of Brittany, has come to Cornwall, where reigns King Mark, his uncle. He has delivered his adopted country from the tribute which it paid to Ireland, and killed in combat Morold, nephew of the king of Ireland, and the betrothed of the beautiful Isolde. But in this terrible combat Tristan has received a wound in the head. He is cared for by Isolde herself, who recognizes in him, in spite of the false name of Tantris, the murderer of her *fiancée* Morold; she is about to kill him in revenge when her eyes meet those of the young hero; at this glance she feels herself disarmed. When he has recovered she leaves him to return to the court of Cornwall. But soon after, Tristan is sent back by the old king, his uncle, to demand the hand of the princess Isolde. The latter is given by her father to the victorious sovereign, in pledge of alliance, and the drama opens with a scene on board the vessel which conducts Isolde to Cornwall.

Tristan, faithful to his mission, watches over the young girl, and brings her back pure to King Mark; he feels a mighty passion surging in his breast, but he bravely resists it, and holds himself resolutely aloof from Isolde. She, on her part, feels herself irresistably drawn toward Tristan; but shrinking from the idea of loving the conqueror of her first love, that proud conqueror who feels only indifference for her, she opens her heart to her friend and attendant Brangäne. She relates to her with suppressed emotion all the preceding drama, and commands her then to go and fetch Tristan, who keeps his place in the ship's stern. The latter, put on his guard by the prudent Kurwenal, his faithful equerry, at

first refuses to leave his post; he ends by obeying the princess, and when the latter proposes to him to drink in pledge of friendship and pardon, he insists that she wishes to poison him, to avenge Morold; however, he accepts and drinks. But the distracted Brangäne has prepared for them a love potion in place of the beverage of death; Isolde and Tristan drain the cup, and fall into an unspeakable ecstasy. At that moment the ship draws near the land, and on all sides burst forth cries and cheers saluting king Mark, who is perceived on the shore awaiting his *fiancée*. Scarcely have Isolde and Tristan, roused by this joyous clamour, awakened from their delirium, when Isolde is offered the crown and the royal mantle. An admirable climax, and a fine dramatic effect.

Those who no longer have the courage to deny the musician in Wagner, attack the poet, and find the first act of Tristan, which is passed entirely on the vessel, empty and meagre. Less meagre and less empty, surely, than the third act of *l'Africaine*. And after all, is it so empty, and does it not contain all the elements of an interesting drama? Does one not clearly follow there the progress of a passion, at first restrained, then bursting its bounds, leading the two heroes to a forgetfulness, of their vows, to an outrage towards the old king, and at last even to death?

In the second act, it is night. One hears the king galloping away, and when all noise has ceased, Isolde, impatient, seizes the torch which is burning and extinguishes it, notwithstanding the counsels of the wise Brangäne. At this signal Tristan comes in, and Isolde runs to meet him. During this long scene of love Brangäne has nothing to do but to keep an outlook; she does this badly enough, however, for the king, forewarned by the treacherous Melot, returns unexpectedly, and surprises Tristan and Isolde; he sorrowfully reproaches his nephew for his treason. Tristan at first stands

abashed, then he throws himself upon Melot, from whose sword he receives a grievous wound; he falls, and the aged Kurwenal bears him away to Brittany, to the mansion of his ancestors.

There, wounded, sure that death will soon overtake him, he feverishly awaits the arrival of Isolde, who has been summoned by the good Kurwenal. The latter affectionately consoles his master and endeavors to awaken hope within him; but Tristan does not desire to live; he courts death, and only asks to see his loved one before expiring. Suddenly a joyous melody bursts forth; it is a shepherd placed on the lookout, who sights afar off the expected ship. Already Isolde is nearing the shore; at last she has come. Tristan, summoning all his strength, arises and goes to throw himself in her arms; but this supreme effort exhausts him; he looks once more upon Isolde and his soul takes flight. The old king, informed by Brangäne that this wild passion was the effect of a magic philtre, comes to pardon and to unite the two lovers; but he finds before him only the dead body of Tristan, and the almost unconscious Isolde. At the voice of Brangäne, she arises as in an ecstasy, and seems on the point of leaving the earth. Unconscious of all around her, she hears and sees only Tristan, far beyond the finite; she aspires to join him, through luminous spheres, and slowly falls, lifeless, upon the body of her beloved.

What is to be said of the score? Each act, taken by itself, forms a gigantic scene of a marvellous intensity of expression, and the entire work is powerfully condensed in this incomparable prelude, which Berlioz failed to understand; in this admirable prelude, built upon that ascendant and infinitely tender phrase in half tones.[1]

[1] Why not recall here a certain annotation of Voltaire? He wrote on one occasion: "The chromatic proceeds through several consecutive semitones, which

"It is singular," said Berlioz, after having heard it at the Italiens, "that the author should have had this prelude performed at the same concert with the introduction to *Lohengrin*, for he has followed the same plan in both. It is another case of a slow movement, beginning *pianissimo*, rising little by little to a *fortissimo*, and falling back again to the shade of his point of departure, without any other theme than a sort of chromatic groan, but full of discordant harmonies, of which long appoggiaturas, replacing the real note in the harmony, make the torture still greater. I have read and re-read this strange page with the most profound attention, and with a keen desire to discover the sense of it, but it must be confessed I have not yet the slightest idea of what the author has tried to do." On the other hand, he found the prelude to *Lohengrin* admirable in every point. Is there any way of reconciling these contradictions?

The heroic loyalty of Tristan, charged with conducting the princess Isolde to the old king Mark, and who, feeling his heart torn with an ardent passion, keeps himself as far away from her as possible, and even refuses to approach her when she sends for him;—the vexation of Isolde, disturbed by the irresistible love which drives her towards the knight who has killed her first love, Morold; irritated to encounter only mute indifference on the part of this proud conqueror, and resolved to poison him in order to avenge Morold; — by their side, the complete, absolute devotion represented by the equerry Kurwenal and the amiable Brangäne, with their wise counsels, now ironical, now affectionate; — the obstinate reserve of Tristan, the increasing passion of Isolde and her thirst for vengeance; the irresistible power which throws them into

produces effeminate music very appropriate for love." Has not Voltaire, then, who was as little of a musician as possible, and superlatively antagonistic to music, anticipated, divined, foreseen *Tristan and Isolde?* This would be droll, and even humiliating for some.

each others' arms after partaking of the love philter, served by Brangäne in place of the poison which Isolde believed she was giving Tristan; their intoxicating bliss, and sorrowful awakening when, as the ship approaches land, the cries of the sailors salute the king awaiting his bride upon the shore;— these are the episodes of the first act, which the author has interpreted with a truth and a variety, of which no idea can be

RICHARD WAGNER ABOUT 1865.
Drawing by M. Renoir after a photograph.

formed except by hearing it. At the second performance in Munich, this finale reached such joyous transports that the audience rose in a body, applauding and cheering the author with uncontrollable enthusiasm.

The rest of the work is at least equal to the preceding, and the third act, especially, filled entirely with the lamentations and outbursts of Tristan, who is about to die, is a con-

ception so powerful, so rich in traits of genius, in marvellous combinations, that it loses all its monotony and holds one spell-bound. The sorrowful appeals of Tristan; that touching moment of the return of his youth, when he hears the shepherd piping the same plaintive song as on the day that his father died; the rude consolations of Kurwenal; the terrible starts of passion which give temporary strength to the unhappy one when the vessel which bears Isolde to him is signalled afar; his last cry of love in beholding her, and the transfiguration of Isolde, "disappearing in the great billows of the ocean of delights, in the sonorous harmony of the regions of perfumes, in the infinite breath of the universal soul," from these different elements Wagner has formed a poetic and musical whole, of an incomparable depth of expression and magnetic power.

As for the second act, which opens with a charming scene between Isolde and the gentle Brangäne, where the voices hold their own so well above the *fanfares* of the chase and the night murmurings and rustling of the forest; this second act, which closes so grandly with the paternal reproaches of King Mark to Tristan, contains also that long duet of love — more than a duet, a complete poem and drama — which is certainly the most extraordinary of musical and dramatic conceptions. The sudden awakening of these two lovers to an uncontrollable infatuation, their recollections, their hymn to the night which brings them together, the distant warnings of Brangäne, finally, their supreme abandon, which no human prudence can check; these dramatic episodes, these inner workings of the soul and of the heart, the musician-poet has interpreted and condensed in a page where the characteristic motives are interwoven and superposed in the most marvellous fashion; where incessantly recurring melodies come to bloom at the surface of this symphonic ocean. A masterpiece, beyond all doubt. But has the author created this master-

piece in direct deduction from his theories and from his views upon art? We will proceed to examine.

It is in this piece that he has especially developed Schopenhauer's ideas, and one will admit that the moment of the drama is singularly chosen. Does one ever see two passionate lovers embracing in a purely intellectual transport, and fervently

M. AND MME. VOGL IN "TRISTAN AND ISOLDE"
at Munich, 1869.

clasping each other in order that they may philosophize better concerning the superiority of night over day, and of death over life? "These so-called lovers," says Gasperini, "are two pupils of Kant, of Schopenhauer, of the Buddhist School. Never, thank heaven, has love spoken this high-flown and barbarous language; never has it thrown itself into mourning

and death with this madness of destruction and submersion." Take their first cry of love! This outburst of recognition towards the night which brings them together, this abhorrence of the day which separates them from a happy poetic antithesis; but the development which follows is no more than philosophic dissertation; and behold what Wagner makes them sing, at the most delicious moment of their ardent embrace! —"Descend upon us, night of love; give me forgetfulness of life, receive me to thy bosom, deliver me from the universe. Already are departing the last rays; that which we have thought, that which we have believed to happen before our eyes, the recollections and the images of things, the traces of illusion, all this is wiped out by the august presentiment of the holy darkness, in freeing us from the world. . . . The world and the paling fascination, the world which the moon illumines with her deceptive glimmering, the world, fallacious spectre which the day places before me; it is I who am the world. Holy life of love, august creation of voluptuousness, delicious desire of sleep eternal, without manifestation and without awakening!"

This whole work, I repeat it, is a masterpiece; but it is so because Wagner, in putting into the mouth of the two lovers ideas inexpressible by the musical language, is involuntarily reduced to interpret by his music nothing more than the general idea of love. "I plunged," says he in good faith, "with an inward confidence into the depths of the soul and its mysteries, and from this innermost centre of the world I saw its exterior form expand before me." Could there be a greater illusion! Instead of depicting, with a precision impossible to obtain by sounds, the inner motives which he supposes to be at work in the soul of his lovers, he has simply rendered their outward movements, and the transport of love which seizes them. Would his musical creation have been different if he had lent to his heroes the philosophic ideas of Pascal or of

Spinosa, of Kant or of Hegel, in place of those of Schopenhauer? Assuredly not.

Thenceforth, no more philosophy. He has merely interpreted, with an incomparable genius, a general idea — love; a common enough situation — a nocturnal rendezvous of lovers. Through what cerebral contortions has he been able to believe that he has accomplished more than this in his music, and what aberration has permitted him to fancy that he has here substituted philosophy for love? Mystery. It is fortunate that he has not succeeded, and that in consequence of wishing to push his idea to an extreme, he has run against the impossible. He has not, then, written this truly unique page in direct application of his system, but rather almost contrary to it, since the inner motives by which he claims to be guided escape the musical art, and he arrives, without perceiving it, only at the expression of a well-worn sentiment and a very ordinary situation. He did not think how truly he spoke when he declared "he had forgotten all theory while composing *Tristan and Isolde*, and at that time had thought only of how much his creative flight was doing to break down the barriers to his written system."

There must be no misconception in regard to the nature of this discussion, which is purely musical, and aims to prove nothing except that in order to interpret love through the medium of music it is best to keep to the "commonplaces of lubric morals," which Boileau talks about. Music, of all arts the most vague, can express only generalities when dealing with the inner workings of the heart and soul. It were quite otherwise with a literary composition, where thought acquires the acme of precision; a love-scene between Héloise and Abélard, for example, might properly admit of school disputations and philosophic arguments. Each epoch, indeed, repeats after its own fashion the eternal theme of love, and the letters of Héloise and of Abélard

prove that this doctor *en robe* and that doctor *en jupons* entertained Cupid with arguments on the real and the nominal, etc.; it is this that M. de Remusat has rendered excellently in his beautiful drama of *Abélard*, in which the spirit of the twelfth century breathes again. But, to repeat, a literary composition is one thing, a musical work is another, and whether it be a question of *Abélard and Héloise*, of *Romeo and Juliet*, or of *Tristan and Isolde*, music is essentially inappropriate for interpreting anything more than the "*lieu commun*" of love, without respect of epoch or of person. Wagner has dreamed of a chimera in believing that he could stretch indefinitely the sphere of action of music; and neither he nor anybody else could ever succeed in doing it.

"It is not without much meditation" — has said an instinctive admirer of Richard Wagner — "not without close study and an indefatigable estimation of the elements which he employs, that Wagner has been able radically to master the various agents of the lyric drama. To dominate thus the harmonic exingencies, to join these broken rhythms, to blend these fierce modulations, to fuse, at length, into a single crystal, all these dissimilar fragments of crystals, requires not only a will of iron, but also an unprecedented penetration of the resources inherent in each element of action. It is enough to be trained by and obedient to science, it is necessary to be an artist; and this dispersion of the central life, of the general expression, into all the parts of the common structure, is not accomplished without a deep sentiment of truth and of passion, where the soul bursts forth and sheds abroad its lustre."

Gasperini proceeds to say that Wagner, in *Tristan and Isolde*, has reacted against that baleful tendency of the Italian and French schools, which readily sacrificed the whole for the sake of the various constitutent elements, and gave themselves less concern about making the entire work live than about

animating the accessory parts. "In doing this," adds he, "Wagner has turned peoples' minds to the side of an argument reform, and has shown them the true road to follow. As a thinker, he will have prepared the hitherto rough and untilled ground; he will have made the path easy for those who would follow him. As an artist, he will have enormously enriched the arsenal whither composers may go to draw their inspiration and their arms."

The prediction is already verified, and how many musicians have striven to appropriate his formulas, his style, in short, the material side of Richard Wagner's art work, who, unhappily, have not his genius, and who, having accomplished nothing with this borrowed plumage, have turned against the innovator, upon seeing him gain ever so little ground in France, and become, if not an immediate menace, at least a danger ahead!

There are but two alternatives in listening to this work, even in the opinion of those who admire it the most; — it is everything or nothing to the hearer. If it takes hold upon you at the outset, you will follow it to the end; if not, it will remain a closed letter. M. Schuré, recalling the indescribable impression experienced at the memorable soirées at Munich in 1865, is the first to confess that such performances are almost as rare as the works of genius which give rise to them. They are possible only through the union of all the performers in a single thought, and through the power of enthusiasm. Of what use, inquire certain critics, are works which call for so many efforts, and which, after all, are comprehended by so few people? To this might be made the reply that all that is great is difficult and rare; or, better still, to say with Berlioz: "It would be truly deplorable if certain works should be admired by certain people!"

These critics are no longer numerous; but how entirely they justify this little sling from Berlioz!

CHAPTER X

DEPARTURE FROM BAVARIA — SOJOURN IN TRIEBSCHEN — THE MEISTERSINGER AT MUNICH

THIS twenty year old monarch had conceived such an admiration for his idol, that, not content with surrounding himself, be it at Munich or at Starnberg, with prints and engravings representing scenes from the works of Richard Wagner, he took delight in arraying himself in the costumes of the different heroes, and even the heroines, of his poems. Later, towards the close of his life, he had a little boat constructed, drawn by two swans very cleverly designed, and, dressed in the garb of Lohengrin, he sailed about on Starnberg lake, fancying that he had descended from the celestial regions, and had come to the assistance of a new Elsa. This admiration, carried as may be seen, to a point bordering on insanity, — symptoms of which were more than once detected by his ministers, — soon became an object of political and religious scandal in Bavaria; for the counsellors of the young king were not ignorant that Wagner in his different works — books and operas — had shown himself by turns atheist with Feuerbach, pantheist with Hegel, buddhist with Schopenhauer.

At bottom, he was nothing more than an artist, in philosophy as in politics, and those who are indignant that "a former revolutionary should have consented to live thus upon the benefactions of a sovereign," show a remarkable scrupu-

lousness. It is possible that the influence exerted upon him in his youth, by the revolutionary ideas in favor at the universities, had caused his sympathies to incline in that direction, but in taking part in the insurrection at Dresden he had yielded principally to disappointed ambition, and had allowed himself to be guided by the exigencies of his fortune. He had thought to find on that side the immediate realization of his ideas in matters of art, and consequently the supremacy which he longed to exercise in the musical world; but the instability of his opinions, political, religious, and philosophic, always changing with his artistic imagination or with his ambition, shows clearly that in politics as well as in philosophy, he was very far from having a sincere and disinterested enthusiasm.

Be that as it may, his enemies found in his previous palinodes pretext for attacking him; and his enemies were numerous, for his arrival had caused much commotion in Bavaria, so conspicuous from the very first were his extravagant tastes and his domineering nature. Little did it matter that he had become a Bavarian subject. The Catholics attacked him as an atheist, the autonomists as a foreigner; both attacked him as a revolutionist; people with no particular opinion were indignant at his extravagances, which drained the public treasury, and the government employees were dissatisfied at seeing him receive all the surplus receipts which had hitherto gone to them. In short, all opinions and all interests found themselves one fine day leagued against him.

Then the newspapers joined in the general outcry, and spent their efforts in exciting the people against the "great composer Hubbub." They called to mind the disturbance which he had caused: Hans von Bülow summoned from Berlin, Peter Cornelius from Vienna, and Frederich Schmidt from Leipsic; so many professors dismissed at the Conserva-

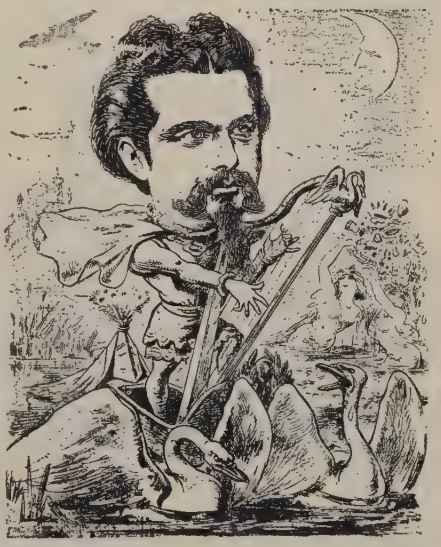
tory and the director abruptly sent about his business to make room for the friends of the new favorite; they exaggerated, if it were possible, his ostentation and his extravagance; they reported that he changed his furniture every six months; they described minutely his wardrobe; they commented upon his famous flat cap of Old-Germany, sometimes blue, sometimes red; he was everywhere and always the cause of all the evils, all the accidents; does he give a military concert on the king's birthday at which an old musician falls stricken with apoplexy, immediately they hold him responsible for this death.

When in January, 1865, the architect Semper, friend of the old war days at Dresden, was sent for by Wagner and received by the king, who desired to arrange with him for the construction of a new grand theatre, the agitation against the spendthrift knew no bounds. Those who drew their income from the civil lists, feeling themselves menaced by these ruinous projects, endeavored to excite the distrust of the people still more, and were unanimously aided by the newspapers. They had a moment of false joy when it was observed that the royal box remained dark and empty during certain performances of *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*, but this did not last long, and the attacks became all the more violent after this disappointed hope.

At that time they gave circulation to the most outrageous reports concerning the intruder, and even went so far as to reproach him with having left his wife to perish of hunger at Dresden, while he was living a life of luxury at Munich. It was necessary that she should publicly exonerate him from so grave a charge by addressing a letter to the calumnious journals. They had announced that she was reduced to the menial office of scullion; then, Madame Wagner, feeble as she was only a fortnight before her death, wrote the following protestation, dated at Dresden, January 9, 1866: "The mali-

cious reports which certain Vienna and Munich papers have been publishing for some time concerning my husband, compel me to declare that I have received from him up to date, a pension which amply suffices for my support. I seize this opportunity with so much the more pleasure since it enables me to destroy at least one of the many calumnies which people are pleased to launch against my husband."

This death-bed denial not sufficing to calm public opinion, which would not listen to reason, Hans von Bülow, and then Wagner himself, had the simplicity to interpose and reply to the charge. "I have seen," said Wagner, in a protestation published in Germany, France and England, "the newspapers pitilessly ridicule my labors and my tendencies. I have seen my work dragged in the mud and hissed at the theatre; but it has remained for me to see my person, my character, my private life, defamed in the most outrageous manner, even in the countries where my works were admired, and where people recognized in my efforts a manly energy and a noble signification."



KING LOHENGRIN.

Portrait of the king of Bavaria, in the costume and the boat of Lohengrin.

(*Der Floh*, Vienna, Aug. 30, 1885.)

The king, faithful to his friendship, at first paid no heed to all this talk. But so much stress was laid upon Wagner's political role in Saxony and upon his exile; the nobility and the clergy were so urgent in their protestations; the coun-

sellors of the young prince reproached him with so much bitterness for compromising the public tranquillity in defending at any cost a man repugnant to all, that he finally yielded, "in order to prove," said he in a letter addressed to one of his ministers, "that the confidence and affection of my well-loved people are in my mind the first consideration." He asked Wagner to leave Munich for a few months, and immediately the delighted populace spread the report of a final estrangement. Wagner, however, knowing well that this disgrace was more apparent than real, had tranquilly taken again the road to exile. In point of fact the favor of the king never failed him, nor was the hostility of the country against him ever disarmed; to the Bavarians he was already "the Prussian" as he was later on to the French.

A NEW ORPHEUS.

The old Orpheus animated the rocks; the new one makes the money-bags dance — and that to an "infinite melody."
(Munich *Punsch*, Dec. 10, 1865.)

The king came to this decision in the month of December, 1865, when he returned to Munich after a prolonged stay at his Hohenschwangau Castle, and found that public dissatisfaction had reached such a pitch as to threaten a riot against him and his favorite. The latter, however, did not leave without protestations on the part of his friends, and immediately after his departure, the Münchner Tageblätter published the following paragraph in response to the king's proclamation: "In declaring that he places before everything the affection and confidence of his beloved people, the king has just decreed the departure of the composer, Rich-

ard Wagner. These words clearly prove that the king has been made to believe that the presence of Wagner had contributed to the agitation of the people, and had diminished its love for and confidence in the sovereign. Through these allegations the king has been grossly deceived in regard to the true sentiments of the people. The presence of Wagner has in no wise diminished the confidence and love of the country for her king, nor has his departure resulted in satisfying the malcontents. The person of Wagner has nothing whatever to do with the affairs of the country and the tendencies of the progressionist party.[1]

A POOR TRAVELLER? OH NO!

Wagner, a sham highway beggar, leaves Munich and takes the road to Geneva. He holds in his hand a ticket indicating the sum per year which he received at Munich, 8,000 florins.
(Munich *Punsch*, Dec. 17, 1865.)

In his desire to isolate himself, to forget and be forgotten (particularly by his creditors, of whom every town contained a few) Wagner sought peace and solitude in Switzerland. From Munich he went first to Vevey, then to Geneva, where it was his purpose to establish himself; but a month had not passed before a very damaging fire broke out in one of the rooms of his villa. In order to

[1] *Musical Guide*, June 17, 1886, Article on King Ludwig II. by Maurice Kufferath. — According to the reports of the time, overlooked in this article, the origin of this departure — or rather the pretext agreed upon — was the refusal to accept the order of Maximilian which the king had graciously conferred upon him. This was said to result in a conflict between the minister and Wagner, in consequence of which the king expressed to the composer a desire to see him leave Bavaria. And the latter left Munich for Geneva on the afternoon of the following day. The king was made the object of an enthusiastic ovation, at his first public appearance after the declaration, and many circles and clubs of the capital sent him addresses of thanksgiving.

escape the noise and confusion attending the necessary repairs, he decided to follow the advice of his physician, who urged him to take a trip into the south of France. He visited Avignon, Toulon, Marseilles, etc.; it was at this last city that he heard of the sudden death of his wife at Dresden, on January 25, 1866.

A worthy creature, says one; a brave woman, says another; a truly excellent person, and very devoted to her husband, but who knew not how to put herself into spiritual communion with him, and who desired concessions to the public which he could not and would not make. Married for nearly thirty years, they had been separated only five years; for she was in Paris at the time of *Tannhäuser*, and it was not until that year (1861) that she went to live at Dresden; why, then, do certain books tell us that they were separated a short time after their marriage, and that Wagner, at the time he composed *Tannhäuser*, had quarreled with his wife, and wished to symbolize the extinction of this profane love in the abandoning of Venus by Tannhäuser?[1]

In the month of February, 1866, the traveller returned to Switzerland. He established himself at Triebschen, near Lucerne, and was very soon gratified by the arrival of Hans von Bülow, hunted out of Munich by the enemy, who were determined to be rid, if possible, of all Wagner's friends. But this happy reunion was of short duration; Hans von Bülow was obliged to go to Bâle, to earn his daily bread by giving

[1] The truth is that there was never any trouble between Wagner and his wife. When the composer, dreaming of fortune, of glory, of an endless series of triumphs to follow the acceptance of *Tannhäuser* at the Opera of Paris, had sent for his wife to join him, she was already seriously afflicted with the heart trouble which was finally the cause of her death. Their reciprocal attachment was almost touching; she treated him like the great child that he was all his life, and he evinced a tenderness for the invalid that was at once filial and paternal. Afterwards, when they returned to Germany, she settled down at Dresden because she was too feeble to accompany her husband in his continual travelling about; but her relations with him while separated, were always the most affectionate.

piano lessons. Before going, however, he installed with Wagner in the quality of secretary, a young musician by the name of Hans Richter, who was to become one of the warmest partisans of the master.

At Munich a universal satisfaction reigned; the people were all contentment at having driven out their unwelcome guest; but what was the general consternation, when, in the spring of 1866, it was learned that the king, notwithstanding the menaces of an imminent outbreak, had gone to wish his favorite musician a glorious anniversary! This unexpected visit had the double effect of consoling the exile and of strengthening the king in his Wagnerian passion. In sending away the musician, the king had by no means promised to renounce his music, and Wagner, more confident than ever of this royal support, joyfully resumed the composition of the *Meistersinger*, which called for another long year of assiduous labor.

The war and the events of 1866, by turning public attention towards politics, contributed to make a calm about the person of Wagner ; and in the following year it was arranged that some model performances of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* should be given at Munich. Not believing it practicable as yet to make a long stay in Munich, the master had elected for directing the studies, Hans von Bülow, whom a royal decree of December 30, 1866, nominated royal capellmeister; and the latter gave himself, body and soul, to his new task. He exacted numerous rehearsals for the different groups of instruments; he spent fully ten hours a day at the theatre; some even declared that he slept there, for he was always the first at his post, and the last.

Towards the end of March, 1867, Wagner's presence was announced in Munich, and it was noticed that he had been received by the king the very next day after his arrival. He remained little more than a week, which time he spent in

conferring with the intendant concerning the stage settings of the two old operas, and the future *Meistersinger*. In view of these model performances, not only had they re-enforced orchestra and choruses, renewed the stage equipments and touched up the decorations, but they had recruited the best singers from all Germany. For the part of Frederick, they had called a young artist, Franz Betz, from Berlin, where he had already shone for some time; Elsa was played by Mlle. Mathilde Mallinger; for Ortrude and Lohengrin, the master had especially designed Mme. Bertram Mayer, of Nuremberg, and his old friend Tichatschek.

A MERE PASSING CALL.

Allusion to the numerous demands of Richard Wagner on the royal treasury.

(Munich *Punsch*, March 17, 1867.)

Wagner, while having full confidence in Bülow, resolved to return and superintend the last rehearsals himself; but this time, in order to alarm nobody, he put up at the hotel, and signified his intention of staying only a short time in Munich. On May 22, 1867, the occasion of his anniversary, a first manifestation took place in his honor, and a concert composed exclusively of his works passed off very successfully. Everything seemed to be going smoothly, when an incident occurred which proved that the hostile party was on the watch, and which decided Wagner to leave immediately.

The general rehearsal had taken place June 11, before the king, the author, and a number of invited guests; it had gone off splendidly, without a single cut, and Wagner, amazed at the ever young and brilliant voice of Tichatschek, could not refrain from embracing with emotion this friend of former

REPRESENTATION OF THE "MEISTERSINGER," AT MUNICH, IN 1868.
(Act I, Scene IV.)—From a design for a fresco, by M. Echter.

years, when on the next day, the king, claiming to yield to the entreaties of "faithful subjects, who are displeased to see foreign artists supplant thus the singers beloved by the public," dismissed Mme. Bertram-Mayer and Tichatschek, and replaced them by two young artists, who were to shine a little later in *Tristan and Isolde*, — Heinrich Vogl and his future wife, Therese Thoma. Wagner then began to suspect, and exhibiting a lively irritation at seeing his score confided to young recruits, he abruptly left the city and went back to Lucerne. Possibly this precipitate flight may have been the result of an understanding between the composer and the king, to provide an honorable exit for the one, and to shelter the other from violent popular complaints. However it may be, the master was already far away when the first performance took place, on Sunday, June 16, with a brilliant success.[1]

King Ludwig had made up his mind that the year 1868 should not pass without his hearing the *Meistersinger* on the stage, and everything was ordered to this end. Moreover, a sudden change in Wagner's favor took place in the public opinion, so that, while continuing to live in Switzerland, he was able to go frequently to Munich, and stay as long as he pleased, to direct the studies of his work. Hans von Bülow aided him with a filial devotion. and such rapid progress was made at the rehearsals that they were able to fix the representation for the month of June. As he had arrived at Munich before the end of May, the king wished to celebrate the 22d of that month, which was Richard Wagner's fifty-fifth

[1] In the month of October of the same year, a union projected between King Ludwig II. and his cousin Sophie, was broken off, on account of the more and more evident incompatibility of temperament between the young people; the father of the princess was obliged to retract his promise, and the king's infatuation for the *music of the future*, then so-called, was said to be no small part of the cause of this rupture *in extremis*, after vows exchanged and presents sent. Such are the reasons officially given; but rumors are whispered of an extremely scandalous adventure, which fully justified the king in the step taken.

birthday, by spending the entire day with the master at the Berg Castle. This new mark of favor was of course sufficient to bring down showers of jests upon the composer. He had the evil eye, said some one, he had already killed Edmond Roche by making him translate *Tannhäuser;* he had killed Ludwig Schnorr by making him sing *Tristan;* pray whom was he going to despatch now with the *Meistersinger?*

After much hesitation in selecting an artist for Walther, Wagner finally chose, in the place of the regretted Schnorr, the tenor Nachbaur, from the Darmstadt Opera, a singer of exquisite voice and elegant figure. For the other parts they had brought together the best artists from the different German cities, and this time the king did not attempt to dismiss them on the eve of the performance to gratify again his "faithful subjects." Betz, who greatly distinguished himself as Frederick, and who was an incomparable Hans Sachs, belonged at the Berlin Opera; Hoelzel, excellent in Beckmesser, came from Vienna; Mlle. Mallinger was from Munich, as was also Mme. Dietz, Madeline; the light tenor charged with the role of David, came from Augsburg, but from a bakery, not a theatre. He was singing in that city with success, when he fell in love with the daughter of a baker, who would not consent to the marriage unless his future son-in-law should abandon the theatre and learn the baker's trade. The lovesick tenor consented; but when Wagner claimed his assistance he hastened to Munich, with the understanding that he should afterwards return to his bakehouse. Finally, the minor roles were held by singers of merit, such as Bausewein, Heinrich, Sigl, Fischer, etc.; and Hans von Bülow would have yielded to no one his place at the head of the orchestra. He really had earned this honor, by the manner in which he had directed the performances of *Tristan and Isolde.*

The first performance, followed consecutively by five more,

took place on June 21, 1868, and the crowd was even greater than it has been for *Tristan*. Wagner had assembled at Munich the van and rear-van of his admirers; critics, men of letters, artists and musicians converted to the Wagnerian cause had received an invitation to this solemnity, at which only three Frenchmen were present, MM. Pasdeloup, Victorin Joncières, and Léon Leroy. The spectacle was announced for six o'clock. A few minutes before the appointed hour, the king entered his box, in the dress and with the bearing of an ordinary citizen. A little after the overture, Wagner came in and seated himself beside the young king, who seemed thus to protect him against a possible storm; useless precaution, for from the outset success was assured, and after each act Wagner was obliged to salute the audience from the royal box. At the close there was an unprecedented ovation, both for Wagner and for his protector; bravos, cheers, wreathes, speeches, nothing was wanting, and, moreover, it was only justice face to face with the work which had just revealed itself to an enthusiastic public.[1]

The *Meistersinger*, like *Tristan and Isolde*, was written by Wagner as a sort of recreation. Having returned to Paris for a short time in the winter of 1861–1862, after his long stay at the time *Tannhäuser* was played, he finished there the poem of the *Meistersinger*, which he had sketched out in 1845, and then abandoned for *Lohengrin*. Messrs. Schott immediately acquired the ownership of the new work, and had it printed in

[1] After Munich, the *Meistersinger* was represented at Carlsruhe, Feb. 5, 1869; then at Dresden, Dessau, Mannheim and Weimar. In 1870 it was played at Berlin, Königsberg, Stettin, Vienna, etc., etc. It was the one of Richard Wagner's works which obtained the most rapid success, in spite of the defective executions, of which the master was far from approving. "If I had a chance to put on the *Meistersinger* with an intelligent company of young people," said he, to Mr. Dannreuther in 1877, "I would require them at first to read and to play the piece; after that, I would make them study the music; and in that way I should be sure of very quickly obtaining an excellent execution."

1862, though not yet offering it for sale. In order to commence the music, Wagner installed himself at Biebrich on the Rhine, opposite Mayence, and in the month of November of the same year, he appeared at a concert given by Wendelin Weissheimer in the Gewandhaus at Leipsic, to conduct the overture to the *Meistersinger*. The room was half empty, not a professional musician had the curiosity to come, and yet the effect was so striking that orchestra and audience joined in enthusiastic applause.[1] About the middle of the year 1863, he went to Penzing, near Vienna, hoping to find there the necessary calm and leisure; in short, after many attempts to complete the work, always interrupted by unexpected accidents, the *Meistersinger* was at last finished at Triebschen, October 20, 1867, and the opera was played immediately at the Munich theatre.

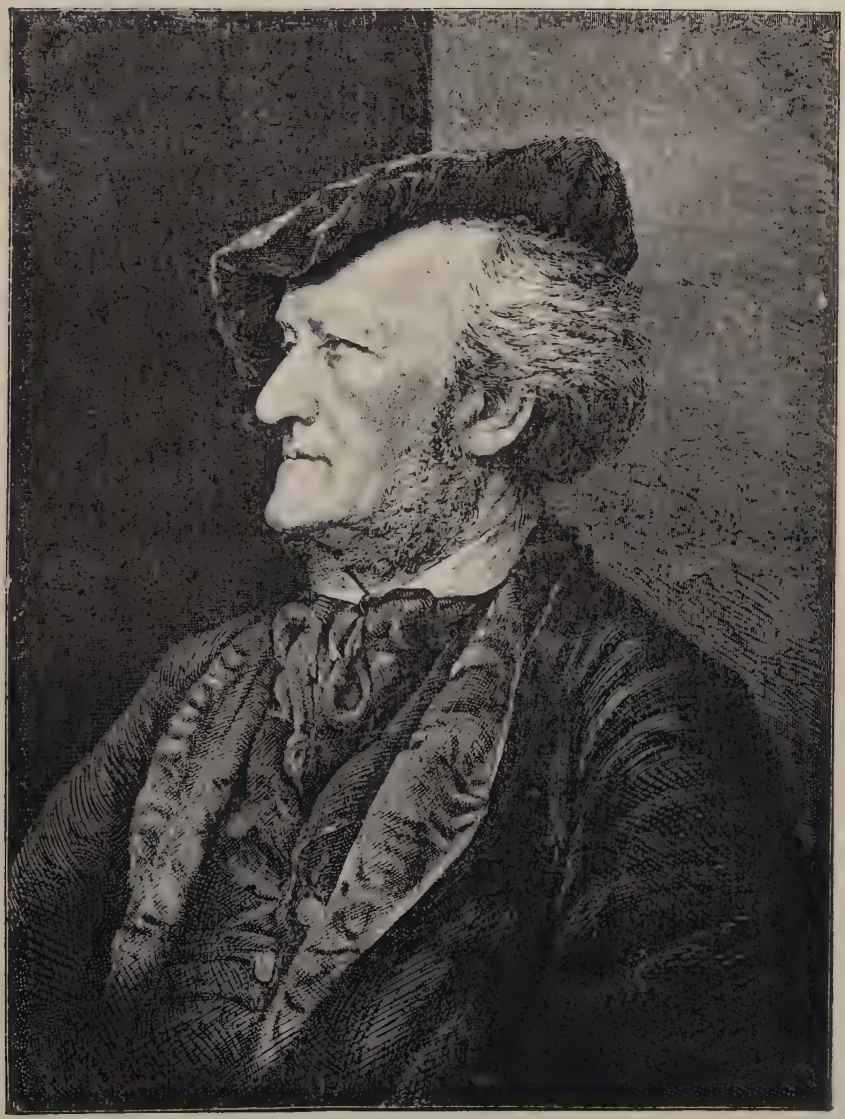
Once released from this long labor, Wagner went to spend a few days at Paris, perhaps attracted by the last embers of the Universal Exposition. As soon as his presence was announced, the old pleasantries recommenced, in remembrance of the remarkable performances of *Tannhäuser*. To give an idea of the nonsense with which people then thought to annoy and worry him, it will suffice to cite the following facetious paragraph, which went the rounds of the Parisian press. A distinguished critic, M. Otto Kamp, had written an article in which he claimed that Richard Wagner, in drawing upon his own intellect for both poems and music, thereby ranked above Schiller and Beethoven. Great emotion, tremendous scandal, followed this assertion; the journalist was overwhelmed with letters, with protestations, with abuse. Pamphlet after pamphlet was published. Kamp kept quiet and let them talk. Then, when the excitement had reached its climax, he published another article which

[1] Dannreuther's personal souvenirs in his article on Wagner (Grove's *Musical Dictionary*).

concluded thus: "People have not fathomed the depth of my idea; let me explain; Yes, Richard Wagner is superior to Beethoven in so far as he is a poet; — yes, he is superior to Schiller, in so far as he is a musician"; twelve-year-old jokes, which date back to the time of *Lohengrin*, when Wagner himself wrote: "Musicians have no objection to my dabbling in poetry, and poets are not averse to confessing my talent for music . . ." Nothing new under the sun, nor under the pen of M. Albéric Second.

It will be remembered that Wagner had at first intended to make of his *Meistersinger* a comic counterpart to *Tannhäuser;* but he modified this early project, and sought to reproduce his own experience by making the chevalier Walther of Stolzing symbolical of free genius at loggerheads with the pedants of the red-tape school, and, by mere force of inspiration, rising superior to criticism, incarnate in Beckmesser. This is his own statement of purpose; some commentors have gone farther, and thought to discover in the ingenuous Eva, immaculate Poesy; and in the shoemaker Hans Sachs, who protects Walther, the King Ludwig II. Still others, without stepping out of the musical world, have recognized in Hans Sachs, Franz Liszt, whom Wagner has often hailed as his good genius, and in Beckmesser, the most pedantic of clerks and the least inspired of men, the learned Ferdinand Hiller, a composer without genius, and who was always most bitter against Richard Wagner. Such comments as these, which amuse lookers-on for the time being, and excite public curiosity, do not long endure. But the work itself holds its own against exhausted criticism, — and that is the principal thing.[1]

[1] This opera of the *Meistersinger* is the fourth, and, up to the present time, the last of Richard Wagner's works which has been represented entirely in the French language. Very cleverly translated by M. Victor Wilder, who has undertaken the same task for *Tristan*, for the Trilogy, and for *Parsifal*, the *Meistersinger*



RICHARD WAGNER, ABOUT 1868.
From a photograph.

The *Meistersinger* and *Tristan* form a pair, in the sense that they are the two short operas — the one historic and comic, the other legendary and heroic — in which Richard Wagner, impatient to produce a work of art according to his ideal, without waiting for the completion of the Trilogy, has realized results which in every point, dramatic and musical, conform to the most rigorous laws which proceed from his theoretic affirmations. Musical drama drawn from the legend, or musical comedy borrowed from everyday life, it is all one; it is always the work of art, as it has been gradually formed in this superior intellect, which cut loose from all previously adopted forms, in order to obtain these essential conditions; — a perfect fusion of song and sentiment, a rigorous consistency between word and note, equal and mutual penetration of music and poetry. And what the author says of *Tristan* in his *Letter on Music*, is likewise true of the *Meistersinger* — that in composing this work he had forgotten all theory, and that he had sounded the depths of the great happiness which results from the complete spontaneity of the artist in his creation.

Is it necessary to repeat that never was the word "system" more misapplied than to Richard Wagner, since he wrote his first four works by instinct, leaning towards the ideal drama, of which the conception was gradually becoming more clear in his mind; and since it was not until he had written *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* that he was ready to give an account of the road travelled over; that he endeavored, pen in hand, to explain the ideas which had taken possession of him, and which had led him to the point attained, that is, to the *Nibe-*

was represented on March 7, 1885, at Brussels, at the *théâtre de la Monnaie*, with a very marked success. The rôles were distributed as follows: — Eva and Madeleine, Mmes. Rose Caron and Blanche Deschamps; Walther of Stolzing, M. Jourdain; Hans Sachs, M. Séguin; Beckmesser, M. Soulacroix; Pogner, M. Durat; David, M. Delaquerrière; Kothner, M. Renaud; Vogelsang, M. Voulet; Nachtigal, M. Vanderlinden; Zorn, M. Desy; a night watchman, M. Franklin.

lungen? Contrary to the teachings of so many people, his dramas have not been written with the view to illustrating pre-established theories, as was the case, for example, with Lessing; on the other hand, it is the theories which have grown out of the works, after the master had freed his genius from all foreign influence, in order to give it every opportunity for a complete unfolding. He conceived and wrote *Tristan* when he had already composed a good part of the *Trilogy*, and as for the *Meistersinger*, although he had written the poem at Paris after the adventure of *Tannhäuser*, he did not finish the music, nor give the work to the public, until after *Tristan* had seen the day.

AT THE HEIGHT OF GOOD FORTUNE.

The bold dream is realized; the impossible is accomplished! *Tristan and Isolde* is going to be performed. All the misfortunes are forgotten. The good times have come. The middle ages and the absolute sovereigns are still of some use.

(Munich *Punsch*, April 30, 1865.)

These two works, then, so dissimilar, matured simultaneously in his brain; and the choice of a subject so different from those which he was accustomed to treat, indicated an instinctive desire to prove that the doctrines formulated in deduction from his preceding works, applied to opera-comique, as well as to grand opera, and that they were, consequently, capable of resisting all attacks from the quarter of routine and *parti pris*.

The *Meistersinger* is a musical comedy, with some snatches of burlesque, and frequent ascends into the realms of real poetry. This poem, assuredly, took definite form in Richard Wagner's mind only after he had found the masterly figure of Hans Sachs, the familiar poet, to act as his principal personage; Hans Sachs, the shoemaker poet, the chevalier Walther of Stolzing, representing superior poetry; Hans Sachs, the friend of Luther and of Albert Dürer, in whom

Goethe and Wieland had already saluted an ancestor, and whose literary celebrity has for its supreme consecration, the work of Richard Wagner. In transporting himself to the middle of the sixteenth century, to the heart of the corporation of meistersingers; in exposing to ridicule both their senseless pretensions, and their servitude to the narrow and antiquated rules of a barbaric code called *tabulature*, he has surely aimed to join satire to comedy, and it is little to be wondered at, when one reflects upon the struggles which he had to undergo in his own country; when one reflects that this opera was written a short time after the lamentable failure of *Tannhäuser* at Paris. Over against these conservative gentlemen, attached to the most absurd ritual, and whose solemn meetings offer a very comical picture of the old established school, exclusive, and opposed to all free inspiration, he personifies in Walther a poet of gentle birth, full of youth and passion, who knows no other rule than his own genius. This antithesis and this combat are the very core of the drama, in which the noble, the beautiful, the true, finally triumph over the petty, the ridiculous, the false, by their power of expansion alone. This idea has been put in action with a variety of characters, an abundance of episodes, a fertility of poetic invention, a richness of melody and instrumentation, which make this drama a stupendous work of its kind. This is what M. Schuré declared eighteen years ago, after the appearance of the *Meistersinger* in Munich, and this, to-day, is the verdict of all who have heard the opera, wherever it has been given.[1]

The séances of the *Meistersinger* of Nuremberg are held in the church, after the close of divine service; it is in this beautiful scene that Wagner presents them to us, and the

[1] The poetic study of M. Edouard Schuré, published first in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, has since reappeared in his two-volume work: *The Musical Drama* (1876 and 1885).

first act opens with a reunion preparatory to the grand competition which is to take place on the following day, St. John's day. The chevalier Walther of Stolzing has lost his heart to the charming Eva, daughter of the rich goldsmith, Pogner, at whose house he lives; and as this latter, a zealous meistersinger, has promised the hand of his daughter to the one who shall come off victorious at the competition, Walther solicits first the title of "meister." But he is absolutely ignorant of tabulature, and the words of counsel dropped by David, the young and turbulent apprentice of Hans Sachs, do not prevent him from making a complete fiasco before the assembled meisters. His rival, the clerk Sixtus Beckmesser, a coarse and vulgar pedant, who also aspires to the hand of the beautiful Eva, wantonly attacks him, and noisily notes down on the blackboard his slightest sins against the poetical code; then all the meisters declare him unworthy and reject him; Hans Sachs alone divines the power and the worth of such a poet.

At the commencement of the second act, it is nightfall, Eva, returning home with her father, cannot resist the temptation of going to consult Hans Sachs upon the result of the trial, under pretext of having her shoes mended. This is a charming scene of coquetry on the part of the young girl, who tries all her arts upon the wily cobbler, to draw him out. The latter, who has himself a tender feeling for the girl, sees through the artifice, and parries her efforts; he ends, however, by telling her of Walther's failure, and she inveighs impetuously against the silliness of the old pedants. Walther, having no longer any hope of winning, is about to run away with Eva; but Hans Sachs, who keeps an eye on the young people, arrests their flight, and takes Walther into his own house. Night descends. Scarcely has the night watchman passed, chanting his refrain, when the brainless Beckmesser arrives for the purpose of sere-

nading Eva. The yells which he is obliged to utter in order to drown the noise made by the cobbler expressly to disconcert him, awaken all the neighbors, who proceed to take sides, and fight it out. They all scamper away at the sound of the watchman's trumpet in the distance, and when the latter tranquilly appears, repeating his somnolent call, the whole town has regained its habitual calm.

Night brings back peace to these troubled souls. In the third act, Hans Sachs, carrying out his role of protector towards the two lovers, and sacrificing his own love to the happiness of the young people, initiates Walther into the primary secrets of the meistersinger's art. At last the day arrives for the solemn *concours* before all the people assembled on the meadowed banks of the Pegnitz.

The crafty Beckmesser, who had thought he was doing a very smart thing to get hold of the dry text of Walther's poem, corrected by Hans Sachs, finds himself quite helpless when his turn arrives to sing, and he is hooted by the crowd. Walther is easily proclaimed victor, and thus gains the hand of Eva.[1]

Apropos of this work, essentially historic, a question presents itself. Does not this exclusion of history in favor of legend, preached by Richard Wagner, seem too arbitrary and absolute, even when applied to his own productions? Some very just reflections upon this point have been uttered by two French authors, who have written a really clear and clever book about Richard Wagner, — a rare thing. It seems to them, in the first place, that the merit of a dramatic poem lies not so much in the choice of the scene in which the action moves, as in the manner in which it moves in that scene, whatever it may be; for the fact is that there

[1] M. Joseph Fluggen, author of the pretty composition on the opposite page, had charge of the decorations at the Munich Opera House, and it is he who was engaged to design the costumes for the Bayreuth representations of *Tristan and Isolde*.

EVA IN THE WORKSHOP OF HANS SACHS.

Act III. of the *Meistersinger*. After a painting by M. J. Flüggen.

are excellent historical libretti, and there are also worthless legendary ones. "And then," they continue, "what is the legend? Is it not usually unverified history, the counterfeit of history, a different reading, more or less embellished? Who shall decide where the one commences and the other ends? Wagner seems to be perfectly able to establish this distinction; he declares himself boldly; he rejects history, he must have the legend, always the legend. But his work partly contradicts this ambition. . . . Lohengrin and Tristan are knights living at an epoch and in a country which the author himself is careful to state precisely, and the accessories with which he surrounds them, are furnished by history, not by legend. Tannhäuser, the younger brother of Robert le Diable, unveils to us a scene from the Middle Ages, where the chevalier-singers accomplish exploits which have nothing of the fabulous about them; the Venusberg is only a picture, serving as a prologue. As to the *Meistersinger*, was there ever a reproduction of the past more precise, more strictly in unison with historical facts?"[1] Assuredly not.

This poem, then, which contains charming scenes, and truly comic situations, is at the same time picturesque, in calling to life a sixteenth century German town with its manners and customs, its corporations and its popular fêtes, and interesting in its rarely precise data concerning the ordeal to be gone through before becoming a meistersinger. Those to whom the details might seem a little tedious, would surely find rest and recreation in listening to the wonderful orchestration, which discloses fresh treasures at every hearing. This marvellous orchestral work has struck admiration into the heart of Wagner's most obstinate detractors; but they add maliciously that they would prefer the symphony without the vocal parts, which, they say,

[1] *The Dramatic Work of Richard Wagner*, by MM. Albert Soubies and Charles Malherbe (one vol., 18mo, Messrs. Fischbacher, 1886).

THE MEISTERSINGER OF NUREMBERG.

Meeting of Walther and Eva. — Act I.

Wagner has treated as a dry and monotonous recitative. Nothing could be wider of the mark; every phrase written for the voice, whether short or long, tender or grand, has a perfectly appreciable melodious form, and is distinct from the orchestral polyphony. Could anything be more delicious, for example, than the tender words exchanged between Walther and Eva at the close of mass, or Pogner's declaration that his daughter shall be given to the victorious singer, or Walther's first song, or the dialogue between Sachs and Eva at nightfall?

But this orchestral work, to which all render homage, is a conception so novel that it needs to be explained as clearly as possible. This entire symphonic discourse, of which each act forms an unbroken whole, is mainly built upon certain typical phrases, or leading motives (*Leitmotive*). Instead of adhering to the old form of opera, in which each separate part confines itself to interpreting something like the sentiments expressed at a given moment, by a certain stage personage, while totally neglecting its general character, Wagner aims to portray the nature and the character of these personages by motives which belong to them, which encompass them, and which end by personifying them.

These type or characteristic motives, as one may choose to call them, differ from each other both in their essence, and in the manner of their treatment. Some have their full development the first time they are heard; such is that of the meistersingers. Others, appearing at first in a fragmentary form, are combined and developed, according as the personage to whom they belong unveils a little more of his character, and finds himself influenced by outward circumstances. Such are the type motives of Walther and Eva, which portray in a marvellous manner the progress of their love; at first the incipient tenderness, then the impatient ardor, finally the declared passion.

There is nothing more to be said; it is a question of an entirely new art, created by Richard Wagner, and which has no connection with the opera properly called, such as it has hitherto been conceived. As has been already remarked in regard to *Tristan*, one must come under the spell of this new creation, and find an extreme pleasure in it, or else reject it altogether. I readily acknowledge, that a work of art so entirely original, and resting upon so complex a musical basis, requires an initiation, like every creation of genius; but this initiation will become gradually less laborious, as the mind becomes accustomed to this new form of art. Moreover, at the present time, all those, who, according to Wagner's wish, listen to his work with a mind free from prejudice, permitting themselves to be led, dominated, carried away by his genius, feel the same magic influence which drives all impressions from their minds save that of the beauty and power of this work.

And how could it be otherwise with a creation which, besides the passages already quoted, contains such merry episodes as the round of the apprentices, or Beckmesser's burlesque serenade, capped by the prodigious uproar of the whole town awakened out of a sound sleep; such grand pages as those which close the first act; the revery and monologue of Hans Sachs, the quintet of the last act[1] and the whole final scene of the *concours*, to say nothing of the admirable overture, which was applauded very enthusiastically even in Paris?

[1] It is difficult to understand how Wagner could have composed this portion of the *Meistersinger*, a veritable quintet, having a determined form, *un pezzo concertante*, as the Italians say, after having formulated a system so absolute as that which he sets forth in *Opera and Drama*. It is supposed that this page was of earlier composition, and it is even said that he wished to destroy it after having finished the *Meistersinger*, but that he was prevented from doing so, by his future wife.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION OF THE SOJOURN IN TRIEBSCHEN — RIENZI AT PARIS — INSTALLATION AT BAYREUTH AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEATRE

T the same time that the *Meistersinger* was first brought out, June 1868, Richard Wagner had published, first as articles in *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* of Munich, afterwards in pamphlet form at Leipsic, an important work, — *German Art and German Politics*, the title of which is known, but which has been read by few people outside the German states.[1] This long paper is directed principally against France, or at least against the preponderating influence which our country appeared to him to exercise even in Germany; and notwithstanding the affected indifference of the author, it is not unlikely that the recollection of *Tannhäuser's* failure at Paris entered largely into this anti-French crusade. Whether he obeyed some instinctive race aversion, whether he yielded to the secret animosity which was then brewing against us in

1 In Sept. 1857, it had been announced from Munich that Wagner had abandoned his plan of explaining his theories in a special sheet, founded and directed by himself, and that he would simply take charge of the musical department of the new journal *Die Süddeutche Zeitung*, which was to appear Oct. 1st. One of the principal proprietors of this journal was his former colleague at Dresden, the music director August Roeckel, which explains this co-operation; but as a matter of fact, the advertised collaboration ended with the articles indicated above, on German art and politics.

Germany, and which was to end in a disastrous war, or whether he acted from calculation in espousing this antipathy, thinking thereby to make his work and his name the personification of German genius rebelling against French civilization, it is not worth while now to raise the question, since nobody could solve it. The only way to do that would be to search the innermost depths of his soul, and even then, one might not discover anything; it is quite possible, indeed, that he himself did not realize the secret motives which seemed to govern him on many an occasion.

This whole work is the development of a passage from the *Researches on European Equilibrium*, in which the economist Constantin Franz exposes the influence exerted upon the European system by French politics, as manifested in the Napoleonic propaganda. "This propaganda," says he, "rests entirely upon French civilization, without which it would be powerless. Thus the only course efficacious in opposing it, consists in throwing off the sway of this materialistic civilization. Now, that is just the mission of Germany; for among all the countries of the continent, Germany alone possesses the ability, the vigor of mind and the force of determination requisite to bring about the ascendency of a higher culture, against which French civilization will be thenceforth powerless. That would be a true German propaganda, which would contribute very essentially to the re-establishment of European equilibrium." Merely reading this maxim at the head of an article in which the author treats upon the connection between art and politics in general, and particularly between the endeavors of German art and the claims of Germany to a higher political importance, gives a glimpse of the developments which are to follow.

The allied armies have delivered Germany and Europe from the hated yoke of Napoleon; but what does it signify

that France has been materially conquered, if she has in turn conquered her conquerors through the sovereign influence of letters and of arts? Bayonets and cannons no longer suffice to check this moral invasion; it is necessary to create a national German art, and to sustain it at any cost in opposition to French art. But why has this national art not been created before? It is because the German stage has been under the domination of the French stage, and has vainly tried to lighten the yoke through the triple effort of Lessing, of Goethe and of Schiller. The evil dates back in France to Louis XIV., "who had established rules which passed for good, rules from which the French are not yet free under Napoleon III."; and in Germany to Frederick the Great, who blindly submitted to French influence, and showed only disdain for German culture. "Honor to Schiller," says he in substance, "for having given to the regenerated spirit the form of the *German youth* who regards with scorn the British self-sufficiency and the Parisian allurements; but the German princes had nothing to do with this awakening of the national spirit; at bottom, they have never understood culture of the arts to mean anything more than the introduction of a French ballet, or of an Italian opera, and, for that matter, they are so yet. It has been a genuine treason towards the spirit of their people, and can only be expiated by greater acts of kindness, of attention and of devotion on their part in the future." It is, he adds, because he counts on these acts, that he points out to them thus clearly the damage done, and the means of repairing it.

The theatre is, in his opinion, the great educating agent of the people, because it is there that German genius finds its most irresistible expansion. It was through the theatre that Lessing had commenced his struggle against the French sway; at the theatre that Schiller had crowned

it with its greatest victory; but Napoleon, in order to drive out the German spirit, had taken the stage away from the inheritors of Goethe and Schiller; here the opera, there the ballet; Rossini, Spontini. Fortunately, German genius awoke once more; if poetry was dumb, melody gave glad evidence of its new life, and the spirit of the German *youth* passed by in the magnificent songs of Weber. Therefore it is necessary to turn forever from the French, who can boast of nothing but a pure theatrical virtuosity, with a special gift of imitation, or art of mimicry, and who seek only a frivolous diversion in their stage performances. It is necessary to raise the German theatre from its debased condition into which it has twice descended, and to the very lowest degree,— by adopting Rossini's parody of Schiller's *William Tell*, and Gounod's parody of Goethe's *Faust*. It is necessary to give a fresh impetus to the spirit of the German people, that intelligent and moral people, to which propriety is so natural that it has no need of French rules.

"We want to know," says he, "what unheard of, truly incommensurable wealth of vivifying organization the politics of Germany would possess in themselves, if, by analogy with the organization of the Prussian army, the necessary elements for culture and for true civilization were attracted into the orbit of power in which the governments find themselves to-day bureaucratically enclosed. To sum the matter up, the propensity of the German spirit for art is universal, like the mission of the German people since its first appearance in history. It is for those who hold in their hands the political destinies of the nation to set the example of the appropriation of this renaissance to the building up of the intellectual life of the people, to the founding of a new Germanic civilization which shall extend its influence beyond the German frontiers." This appeal is addressed to all German princes, but the following is

more special: "One word from the conqueror of Kœnigsgrætz (Sadowa) and a new force enters into history, a force before which French civilization will pale forever."

In other words, let us have the *Nibelungen* represented.

At the first performance of the *Meistersinger* at Munich there were only three Frenchmen present, as we have said, and M. Pasdeloup was one of the three. This courageous founder of the Popular Concerts, being a passionate admirer of Wagner's music, had done all in his power to make it familiar to the French public; but his efforts were perforce limited to symphonic fragments. When he took the direction of the Theatre-Lyrique, in October, 1868, his first desire was to bring out one or two of the master's operas complete, in order to atone, as far as possible, for the failure of *Tannhäuser*. To lead off with, he chose the opera of *Rienzi*, which, being cast in the old familiar mould, seemed to him the most appropriate for an entering wedge. Since Wagner would not put himself out for so slight a cause, M. Pasdeloup made the journey from Paris to Zurich in order to confer with him in regard to his wishes, plans, etc. But he failed to take into account the ignorance and stubbornness of the French journalists and amateurs, who, without taking the trouble to examine the style of the work, or inform themselves of its date, attacked or defended *Rienzi* according as they had attacked or defended other works signed by

RICHARD WAGNER, BY GILL.
(*Eclipse*, April 18, 1869.)

the same author; it was simply his name that they hissed or applauded so confidently. This performance, given on April 6th, 1869, did not in the slightest degree modify public opinion towards Richard Wagner, and the honorable endeavor of M. Pasdeloup failed to produce an effect either good or bad, notwithstanding the success of certain purely melodious portions, like the cavatina of Adriano, the prayer of Rienzi, and above all, the chorus of the messengers of peace.[1]

It was principally Wagner's enemies who, affecting impartiality, urged the director to give a more decisive opera than *Rienzi — Lohengrin* for example, in order to do full justice for once, to the claims of this so-called reformer. "When thirty or forty thousand people shall have been scalped by this noisiness of the Red-Skin," wrote one furious individual, "free criticism, whose sole motive is the splendor of genuine art, will no longer be accused of prejudice in regard to this too celebrated *melodist of the forest*, and Wagnerianism will be held, by the immense majority of dilettanti, for just what it is, — the noisiest of mystifications." A very erroneous judgment. The great mass of the public had no opinion on the subject; and being wearied by the wrangling between the defenders and the detractors, and seeing only an opera as brilliant, as noisy as other operas, but not more original, exhibited no eagerness to hear it. So, notwithstanding the commotion raised over it, *Rienzi* was not able to live through more than twenty-six performances.

Wagner, very well counselled by his Paris friends, had

[1] The French translation was by MM. Nuitter and Guilliaume. Monjauze gave a spirited rendering of Rienzi; Mlles. Borghèse and Sternberg were highly satisfactory in the roles of Adriano and Irene, and a young pupil of the Conservatoire charmed everybody by her rendering of the little solo in the chorus of the messengers of peace. MM. Lutz (Orsino), Giraudet (Colonna), Massy (Baroncelli), Bacquié (Cecco,) and Labat (Raimondo), completed an excellent *personnel*.

REPRESENTATION OF "RIENZI," AT THE THÉÂTRE LYRIQUE, PARIS, IN 1869.

Final scene of the third act (the Forum).—After an engraving of the time.

affected to be disinterested. "... My presence and my participation at the performance which is in preparation," — wrote he to Mme. Judith Mendès, — "might give rise to a misunderstanding. I would have the air of putting myself at the head of a theatrical enterprise, for the purpose of regaining through *Rienzi* what I had lost through *Tannhäuser*, at least, that is without doubt the way that the press would interpret my coming. Now the *mise en scène* of *Rienzi* has been entirely a personal question between M. Pasdeloup and myself. After the performance of the *Meistersinger* in Munich, and the attention which it attracted, several propositions were made to me. First it was proposed to have a German troupe give my six operas in Paris, one after another; then they wanted to give *Lohengrin* in Italian; next it was *Lohengrin* in French. In short there have been no less than five projects laid before me this summer, concerning the representation of my works in Paris; I have not encouraged one of them, however. When M. Pasdeloup came to tell me that he took the direction of the Theatre-Lyrique with the intention of giving several of my works, I did not know how to refuse this zealous and capable friend; and, as he desired to begin with *Rienzi*, I told him that was the very one of all my operas which, it had always seemed to me, would adapt itself the most easily to the French stage. Written thirty years ago, with the Grand Opera in view, *Rienzi* presents to the singers none of the difficulties, and offers to a Parisian public none of the peculiarities of the works which have followed it. It is allied, both by its subject and by its musical form, to the operas which have long been popular in Paris. ... Whether or not *Rienzi* will make its way without me; whether or not my presence would be of any assistance; such, in few words, is my way of looking at the matter, and such is the line of action which I have decided, or rather,

which I am called upon to follow in regard to the representation of my works in Paris.[1] . . ."

Thanks to this clever policy, he was not deeply cut by this mediocre success, and easily consoled himself for it. Besides, there were other questions under discussion in Germany just then, which had far greater interest for him; at last, there was really a prospect of having the *Nibelungen* mounted. The king, impatient to hear some of this new creation of Wagner's, had decided to have a part of it performed on his fête day, Aug. 25, 1869,[2] and from the end of June the Grand Theatre had closed its doors, and the stage had been turned topsy turvy to accommodate the machinery necessary for the performance of a work which offered such unheard-of, such insurmountable difficulties. During these preparations, the artists of the orchestra and choruses were hard at work under the direction of Hans Richter, an exceptional musician, and deeply devoted to Wagner's interests.

The musical studies progressed very well, and yet, in spite of all efforts, they were obliged to postpone the performance of the *Rheingold* till the first of September. As this date drew near, the friends of the author were seized

[1] It goes without saying that these French letters of Wagner's were reviewed and corrected before they were given to the public; but he was able, in time, to speak the French language very passably. At a public sale in Berlin this year, a letter was sold which was signed simply with the initial R.; the following extract, from a letter written in French (about 1839) apropos of the translation of the libretto of *Rienzi*, will show what remarkable French he spoke at that time. "Monsieur, j'espère bien que vous auriez la bonté de finir votre travail pris pour moi et pour mon avantage de corriger ma mauvaise traduction de mon sujet d'un grand opéra: Rienzi. En c'espérant, je vous prie, Monsieur, bien fort de m'envoyer cette ouvrage à Mittau sur mon addresse si bientot que possible." This curious specimen of Wagner's first French sold for forty marks.

[2] In the early part of the preceding year, the report went abroad that the king had put at Wagner's disposal the Crystal Palace of Munich, transformed into a theatre for his accommodation, and there was much laughter over the *aquarium*, which would be just the thing for the Rhine daughters to paddle about in.

with a very lively uneasiness on the subject of the stage equipments and spectacular effects; everything went at cross purposes, and the depths of the Rhine and the splendors of Walhalla were ridiculous in the last degree. In their extremity they telegraphed to Wagner, to come to Munich and judge for himself. He went immediately, and called a general rehearsal, to which a number of the faithful ones were admitted; including a score of Parisians who had assembled at Munich for the purpose of witnessing this remarkable performance. It was a veritable breakdown; Wagner protested against the grotesque *mise en scène*, but he could get no satisfaction from the royal intendant. Furthermore, the news of his arrival had awakened the old political enmities, and there was much talk about giving him a *charivari*, to punish him for his abusive pamphlet about the Jews.

Thus Wagner found himself, as a Protestant, between the Catholics, who could not pardon him for winning the king's affection, and the Jews, who still allowed his pamphlet to rankle in their hearts; as an author, between a blind intendant and clumsy decorators. In this difficult situation, it seemed best for him to return to Lucerne, and his friends had no difficulty in persuading him to this effect.

Hans Richter, for his part, refused to conduct such a badly prepared representation; as for the singer Betz, he left for Berlin the same day, in order to escape from vain solicitations. Notwithstanding these serious drawbacks, the royal intendant was expected to be forthcoming with a performance of the *Rheingold*, which the king was determined to see at any cost. There was a lively rushing about at the eleventh hour, to get a bass singer and a leader, M. Camille Saint-Saëns being urged to fill the latter post; but at every hand they met with a peremptory refusal. As a crowning blow, Hans von Bülow sent word that he was ill.

RICHARD WAGNER, ABOUT 1874.
Drawn by M. E. de Liphart.

There was no help for it, and they were obliged to announce to the king the radical impossibility of bringing out the *Rheingold* before the end of September at the very earliest. This chapter of accidents only acted as a stimulus to the king's affection for the composer, and in spite of the efforts of his counsellors, who were too clever not to make the most of this disaster, he took no rest until the performance of *The Rheingold* was an accomplished fact. In order not to lose the results of the studies made and the money expended, no time was lost in sending for the machinist Brandt, of Darmstadt, to repair the clumsy makeshifts of the Munich machinists. The baritone, Kindermann, took the place of Betz, and Eberle was charged with carrying on the studies which Hans Richter had deserted at the last moment. Before the end of the month the royal will was gratified; the first performance took place on September 22d, thanks to a fortnight's hard work on the part of the new leader, Wüllner, the singers Vogl and Kindermann, and the clever machinist Brandt. The material end was at last attained, but the moral effect was doubtful. At the first performance, the audience were undecided, almost hostile, and the German patience, every where proverbial, gave out before these four interminable *tableaux*, with no *entr'acte* nor moment of rest. It must be said that this delay of a month had made a great change in the composition of the audience; that very many of the most faithful partisans, after having danced attendance for so long

SIEGLINDA aids Siegmund in drawing the sword from the ash tree, whereon they have engraved their initials within two flaming hearts.
(From *Schultze and Müller, The Ring of the Nibelungen*, 1881).

in the month of August, had not been able or willing to return in September, so that *The Rheingold* was played to a public less enthusiastic, less acquainted with the composer, and even inclined to regard his innovations unfavorably. But the work was performed, and that was the main point; its honor was saved.

A romancer-poet, in narrating these incidents, in which he claims to have played a prominent part, asserts that *The Rheingold* was delayed a whole year; such a slip of the memory on a very important point proves that these poetic accounts are not always to be trusted. On the other hand he has drawn a very life-like portrait of Wagner at this period. "... Sometimes we were seated, but he, never! No, I do not recollect ever to have seen him sit down, unless it were on a piano or a table. Back and forth, all over the great room, moving the chairs about, diving into all his pockets for his snuff-box, always lost, or his spectacles which sometimes dangled from the pendants of the chandelier, but which were never on his nose, clutching at his flat velvet cap which hung over his left eye with the effect of a black cock's comb, rolling it between his clenched hands, stuffing it into his waistcoat, pulling it out again and putting it back on his head, he was always talking, talking, talking! .... He flew into transports; sublime imagery, puns, barbarisms; an incessant flow of words, superb, tender, violent or jocular. And, sometimes laughing immoderately, sometimes melting into tears, sometimes working himself up into

Loge, the Fire King, carried off by his enormous red coat.
(From *Schultz* and *Muller*, *The Ring of the Nibelungen*.)

a prophetic ecstacy, he mixed many moods and many subjects in his extraordinary improvisations: — the new dramas, the King of Bavaria who was not a *bad boy*, the tricks which the Jewish capellmeisters played him, the subscribers who hissed *Tannhäuser*, Mme. von Metternich, those rascals of editors, the response which he thought of making to the *Augsburg Journal*, the theatre which he was going to have built on a hill near the city, where people would come from all countries, Sebastian Bach, Auber, etc., etc." [1]

The following year it was *The Walküre's* turn to be brought before the public. Up to that time only a few important fragments of this opera had been heard, like the finale of the first act, and the ride of the Walküres, which had been played at Munich and Vienna in 1863 and 1864. This time such vigorous measures were taken as to enable them to bring out the work on the day promised, June 26, 1870, and they were not obliged to send away the enthusiasts, who had come from every corner of Europe; too much had been lost in seeing them depart before *The Rheingold*. Thus the result was infinitely better. It must be added that the work was conceived more in the customary vein; that the *Walküre* presented a struggle of the human passions more natural and interesting than the solemn evolutions of *The Rheingold*, and that Wagner the poet, had wonderfully served Wagner the musician, in offering him true dramatic "situations" to set to music. The musician, in his turn, had admirably seconded the poet, in that passionate episode of the recognition of Sieglinda and Siegmund in the first act; in the scenes of Brunhilda in the second, particularly that with Siegmund; in the ride of the Walküres, Wotan's farewell to Brunhilda, and that last audacious embrace, which was condemned at the rehearsals for all sorts of good

[1] *Richard Wagner*, by M. Catulle Mendès (1 vol. 18mo, Charpentier, 1886).

MME. MATERNA, AS BRUNHILDA.

(Not in French edition.)

reasons, and which finally gained its cause, without appeal, before the public.

It was a success, then, in spite of unpleasant predictions; a grand success, to which some timid ventures at hissing during the long scenes of the second act, added a sort of zest. The execution was perfect in every particular, Frl. Stehle (Brunhilda), the Vogls (Siegmund and Sieglinda), Kindermann (Wotan), Bausewein (Hunding), and Frl. Kaufmann (Fricka), had all shown a rare dramatic intelligence, and had rendered in a remarkable manner the character of their personages; the eight Walküres, sisters of Brunhilda, were represented by Frau Possard, Frls. Leonoff, Müller, Hornauer, Eichheim, Ritter, E. Seehofer, and Tyroler. The orchestra also, directed by Franz Wüllner, showed itself in perfect training, and played with much spirit. It was increased to one hundred and twenty performers at least, and was placed out of sight of the spectators, according to instructions from Wagner, who had at last realized a reform which was very dear to him. The *mise en scène*, very elaborate and very ingeniously conceived, was the work of the machinist Brandt and the scenic artist Jauk; the whole costing the bagatelle of fifty thousand florins.

It was the king who paid it; it was the king alone who made possible such an execution of Richard Wagner's works, and yet he was not present at the first performance. He waited for the third; then, in order to enjoy it better, he ordered *The Rheingold* to be performed for his benefit a few days in advance; one could not have given this infatuated prince too much "music of the future"; on the contrary, he never seemed to get enough.

It was at that time that Wagner composed, as an expression of his sentiments of profound recognition towards his royal friend, a truly impassioned bit of verse and had it printed at the head of the first score of *The Walküre;*

MME. PAPIER, AS SIEGLINDA.
(Not in French edition.)

afterwards he replaced it by a general dedication of the Trilogy to his benefactor:

O King! August protector of my life!
Thy goodness knows no end. A refuge thou,
Come in the evening of my life; I pause
For words to fitly sing thy gracious deeds.
. . . . . .
I cannot measure all thy benefits,
Save by comparison with former days;
No star arose but paled and disappeared;
Fond hopes supreme, I lost them one by one.
. . . . . .
Now all is changed, — henceforth I proudly walk
Cheered by the royal sunshine of thy Grace![1]

Two months after the appearance of *The Walküre*, August 25, 1870, Richard Wagner, a widower for four years and a half, married at Lucerne, Mme. Hans von Bülow, who had just been divorced from her husband in order to be united to the man whom she loved and admired above all the world. This wedding was strictly private, being witnessed only by the faithful Hans Richter and two or three intimate friends. Mme. Hans von Bülow, formerly Cosima Liszt, was the daughter of the great pianist and Mme. d'Agoult. She was then twenty-nine years old. She carried to her new husband a loyal heart, a strong and highly cultivated mind, and an inexhaustible devotion, of which she had already given many proofs. In marrying again, she retained the charge of the four charming young daughters of her first marriage, the eldest of whom, Blandine von Bülow, has since married the Italian Count Gravina.

Richard Wagner, in calling Hans von Bülow after him wherever he went, to Zurich, to Munich, to Lucerne, made, in a manner, the artistic fortune of this young couple. Hans

[1] *Musical Guide* (June 17, 1886), Necrologic Article by Maurice Kufferath on King Ludwig II.

von Bülow, very accomplished, very well informed, designed for a diplomatist, but turned towards music by the decree of Liszt and Wagner; a thorough musician who entertained a religious admiration for his idol and who knew and cherished the very least attempt that flowed from Wagner's pen, was his willing slave and tool. It is not surprising then that his wife, constantly in the presence of this fervent adoration, should have felt in her own heart a growing passion which first betrayed itself at the time of the *Tristan* performances in 1865, so marvellously directed by Hans von Bülow, which grew stronger with time, and which finally led her to abandon her husband and go to Lucerne. This precipitate flight was a thunderbolt for the man and the artist. Sanguinary thoughts filled his mind for a moment; but the artist got the mastery of the man. "If it were only somebody that I could kill," said he with heroic resignation, "he would have been dead before this . . ." He never again saw the master to whom he had given so much of his life and heart, and later, when the wound had healed, he also married again, and devoted himself more actively than ever to the Wagnerian cause; the genuineness of this devotion was shown to good advantage when it was a question of subscribing to the representations of the Trilogy at Bayreuth.[1]

In 1869, a French woman who had a profound admiration for Richard Wagner's music, went to visit him at Lucerne, and she has described his retreat and his serene home-life as follows: "At the setting of the sun I arrived at Triebschen, that blest corner of the earth where I have since spent so many delightful hours. It was a sort of promontory, very picturesque, which jutted into the lake; there

[1] Two years later, towards the end of the year 1872, the religious consecration was given in the presence of the *abbé* Liszt, to this union of Richard Wagner with Mme. von Bülow, the latter having renounced the Catholic faith and adopted the Lutheran religion, which was that of her new husband.

was no railing, no gate; the garden had no fixed limits, and stretched away indefinitely towards the neighboring mountains. The house had a very simple exterior, gray, with a a roof of sombre tiles; but inside, where everything was arranged with taste and elegance, one felt the presence of a woman. Mme. Wagner appeared in the midst of her children, blonde, stately, gracious, with a winning smile, and soft, dreamy blue eyes. That evening was delicious; the master was in high spirits, and showed an incomparable gaiety and vigor. I was not expecting such vivacity, such flashes of wit, such *finesse* of language. He talked of Paris where he had suffered so much, but which he loved still, and he spoke without bitterness of the great battle of *Tannhäuser*."[1] After a fortnight of quasi-residence at Triebschen, the visitor had become so attached to her hosts that she took leave of them with many regrets, and promised to return the following year. When Wagner's son was born, she gladly accepted the proposal to stand godmother, although she was not able to be present at the ceremony. This son was baptised with the name of Siegfried, after the hero of the opera by that name which Wagner was then engaged in composing. In the last letter which Mme. Gautier received from Wagner before the siege of Paris, a letter dated September 5, 1870, he referred to the ceremony of the

RICHARD WAGNER BY KLIC.
(*Humoristische Blätter*, Vienna, May 18, 1873).

[1] *Richard Wagner and His Poetical Work*, by Mme. Judith Gautier (12mo, Charavay, 1882).

christening: "At the very moment of the benediction, a storm burst with flashes of lightning and terrific claps of thunder. It seemed as if the thunderbolts were to play their part in the life of this terrible boy. But I like omens from Heaven, whereas I have no patience with the terrestrial disturbances which have deprived us of your presence. I preserve the silence so wisely agreed upon between us. Yes, happily, there is a region of existence where we may be always united. All that separates us now, even in our judgments of the things which appertain to this region, can only serve to bring us nearer together with time." In these last lines he refers to the war which was commencing, and in regard to which the two friends had agreed to guard an absolute silence.

This same year, 1870, possibly in order to take advantage of the excitement occasioned by a re-issue of *Judaism in Music*, signed this time with his full name, Wagner published two brief, but very interesting critical writings. The first was his pamphlet, *Ueber das Dirigiren* (On the Direction of the Orchestra), which had no echo outside of Germany, but which, being aimed directly at several eminent capellmeisters, stirred many angry passions, and revived the most violent discussions for or against the author. Outside of these attacks, this study is one of his best; it is a little treatise on style, in which he sets forth his views on the best manner of rendering classical music, with numerous examples taken from Beethoven, Mozart, Weber, etc.

The other work, *Beethoven*, published on December 2 at Leipsic, is a singular mixture of metaphysics and music. He gives a sort of resumé of all the writings on the metaphysics of music, and embodies some of Schopenhauer's ideas on the musical art, ideas which that philosopher confessed his utter inability to prove, although they satisfied him. Not content with these, Wagner adds some quotations

from Schopenhauer's essay on visions and the causes relating to them; but aside from this metaphysical jumble, the pamphlet contains an exposé of Wagner's ideas on the meaning of Beethoven's music, which is really worth the while of serious people to read attentively. It is the writing of a musician clear-headed and sensible, in spite of Schopenhauer.

VILLA TRIEBSCHEN.

Richard's Wagner's residence on Lake Vierwaldstätter where the "Meistersinger," "Rheingold" and "Götterdämmerung" were composed.
(Not in French edition.)

In 1871, Wagner, wishing to make a pleasant surprise for his wife's birthday, and to celebrate also the first anniversary of his little son's birth, secretly wrote that familiar and much admired composition, the *Siegfried-Idyll*, with a preface in verse, explaining that it was the purpose of the piece to express the pure and serene sentiments which filled

one's mind when gazing upon a sleeping infant. This idyll, written for a small orchestra, is built upon two or three prominent themes from the score of *Siegfried* (principally the love-motive in E minor from the last scene) with which is interwoven a popular German cradle-song. Written, as it is, in a dreamy and tender half-tone throughout, this piece is an exceptional one from the pen of the master.

In order to make the surprise complete, Wagner had arranged with Hans Richter to get a little orchestra together at Zurich, and prepare the execution of the piece there. When the day arrived, Hans Richter conducted his musicians to Triebschen, grouped them as best he could on the front steps, and gave the little band over to Wagner's direction. At the first attack Mme. Wagner came from her room, and listened with delight to this touching attention from her husband. This composition, naturally dedicated to Mme. Wagner, and which is sometimes called *Morceau de l'escalier* in remembrance of its first execution, was played again in 1871 at Mannheim, and in 1877 at the Court of the grand duke at Meiningen, always under the author's direction; but it was not until 1878 that he decided to publish it, and two years later it was heard in Paris.

In reality Mme. Wagner need not have experienced more than a relative surprise, for this sort of concert, these musical celebrations of anniversaries, are very common in Germany, and Wagner never failed to do his part, unearthing some forgotten work of his youth, or offering some new composition; it was thus that he had the prelude to *Parsifal* performed at Bayreuth, also for his wife's birthday. And while on the subject of musical surprises, it may be in order to recall the one which the King Ludwig II. once managed, to celebrate Wagner's birthday. It was on the 22d of May, 1869. On that day there arrived at Wagner's house, at Triebschen, four French musicians who were justly famed as

the best interpreters of Beethoven's last quartets, — MM. Maurin, Colblain, Mas and Jacquart, the latter having taken the place of Chevillard, who was unable to join his partners.

These gentlemen were received in secret by a third party, informed of the king's intentions; they got their instruments ready and awaited the signal. What was the master's amazement on entering his reception-room, in his dressing gown and slippers, to discover our four artists presenting arms. He stood for a moment in open-mouthed astonishment; then, recognizing Maurin whom he had met in Paris, he welcomed him with open arms, and received them all with a sincere joy. They played several quartets for him, among others the 8th, 14th and 15th. Thus the day passed very pleasantly, with *entr'actes* for sociability and refreshment. In one of these moments of rest, Wagner proposed two toasts, one to his royal protector, the other "to the greatest of French musicians, Camille Saint-Saëns," — the same Saint-Saëns who since . . . but let us pass. Wagner always preserved the most lively recollection of this unexpected fête, and, some years before his death, he said to one of his Paris friends that he had never heard Beethoven's last quartets played better than by these four French artists.

THE MODERN KNIGHTS OF THE GRAIL.

Liszt. Richard Wagner. Bülow.
(*Der Floh*, Vienna, June 30, 1882.)

Meanwhile, this plan of executing different portions of the Trilogy year after year, was far enough from conforming to Wagner's pet project. To treat them thus as separate and distinct operas, was to class them in the ordinary opera

category, whereas it had been Wagner's aim to express in this grand *ensemble* "the antagonism between his artistic tendencies and the existing theatrical institutions"; to launch a protestation, almost a challenge, against the condition of the opera-theatres; now, from the moment each fragment of this whole was treated like an ordinary work, there was no longer any protestation or challenge. Thenceforth, Wagner was haunted by a fixed idea: to have a theatre in which he should reign as absolute master, where his work might be executed under conditions adequate and identical with those of its conception.

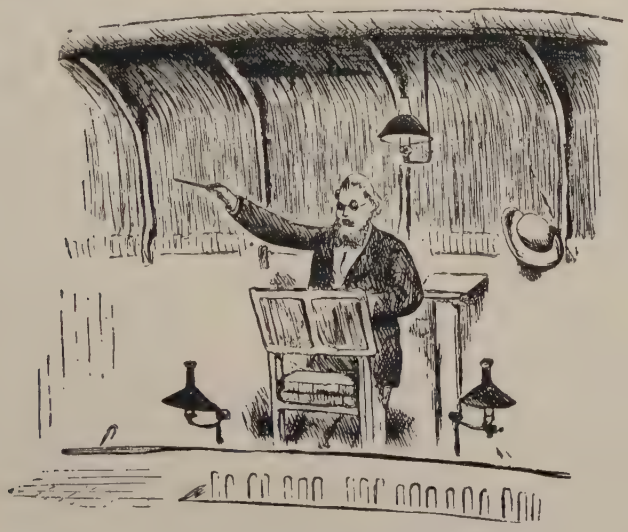
From 1867, he had been cherishing this idea, and his architect friend, Gottfried Semper, had drawn at that time by order of the king, a plan which was displayed at the Zurich Exposition; but this gigantic plan, which took no account of difficulties, earthly or otherwise, entailed such ruinous expenses that the king was frightened; his purse would have been emptied by barely a quarter of the enterprise. The hostility of his people and of his ministers had already constrained him to close, after two months' trial, the school of song established according to Wagner's ideas, for the purpose of forming singers after his own heart. What would have happened if he had proposed expending the enormous sums of money required for the model theatre? Wagner realized that the royal protection was insufficient to procure for him the special theatre necessary for the representation of the Trilogy as he had conceived it, and he resolved to appeal to the people by exalting its artistic patriotism and its national pride. This project was well timed, for the over-excited pride of the Germans after the war of 1870 was calculated to incline their hearts to Wagner's teaching and preaching in favor of Germanic art. For an instant he flattered himself with the hope of finding in the new Emperor an aid more effective than that of the

Bavarian king; but William I., having little enough interest in matters musical, had simply sent him three hundred thalers, perhaps in acknowledgment of the march (Kaisermarsch) which Wagner had composed for the coronation of the new German emperor, and which was performed for the first time in Berlin, April 14, 1871; it is moreover a magnificent composition, plainly inspired by Bach and Beethoven, but it is doubtful if the emperor concerned himself much about it. Three hundred thalers! This pittance was not what the author expected, and he did not hesitate to express his dissatisfaction.

"Nothing," he wrote with bitterness, "similar to what I had projected, and at last commenced with confidence, thanks to the co-operation of enthusiastic friends, had ever yet been undertaken. It was entirely worthy the support of our *young imperial government*, which could not have inaugurated its brilliant reign more gloriously than by giving the most liberal aid to a disinterested object, and for a motive purely ideal. Such an act would have been all the more to its credit and glory, since the German people itself is poor, and has not vast resources at its disposal to satisfy its intellectual needs, *whereas the government at that epoch was overflowing with wealth through the terms of treaty with its vanquished neighbor.* But the powers which reigned in Germany, neglectful as usual of the interests of true art, saw in my efforts at that time, as they had done in the past, only the expression of the most extreme personal ambition, and in the institution which I projected, nothing but the extravagant demand for an extraordinary and useless representation of my own works, solely for the gratification of my personal self-love. Thenceforth the achievement of my enterprise was left entirely to myself and my friends."[1]

[1] Richard Wagner, *The Work and the Mission of My Life*, autobiography translated by M. Edmond Hippeau (1844). Wagner, then, had innocently flat-

During the last days of his stay in Switzerland, in December, 1870, he had published his study on Beethoven, in which he cleverly likened his own work to that of the master of masters, by explaining that Beethoven had been irresistibly led, by the continuous progression of his genius, to unite words to the orchestra in his last symphony, and that he, Wagner, had carried out the supreme idea of the master



HANS RICHTER DIRECTING THE ORCHESTRA AT BAYREUTH.
From an original sketch.

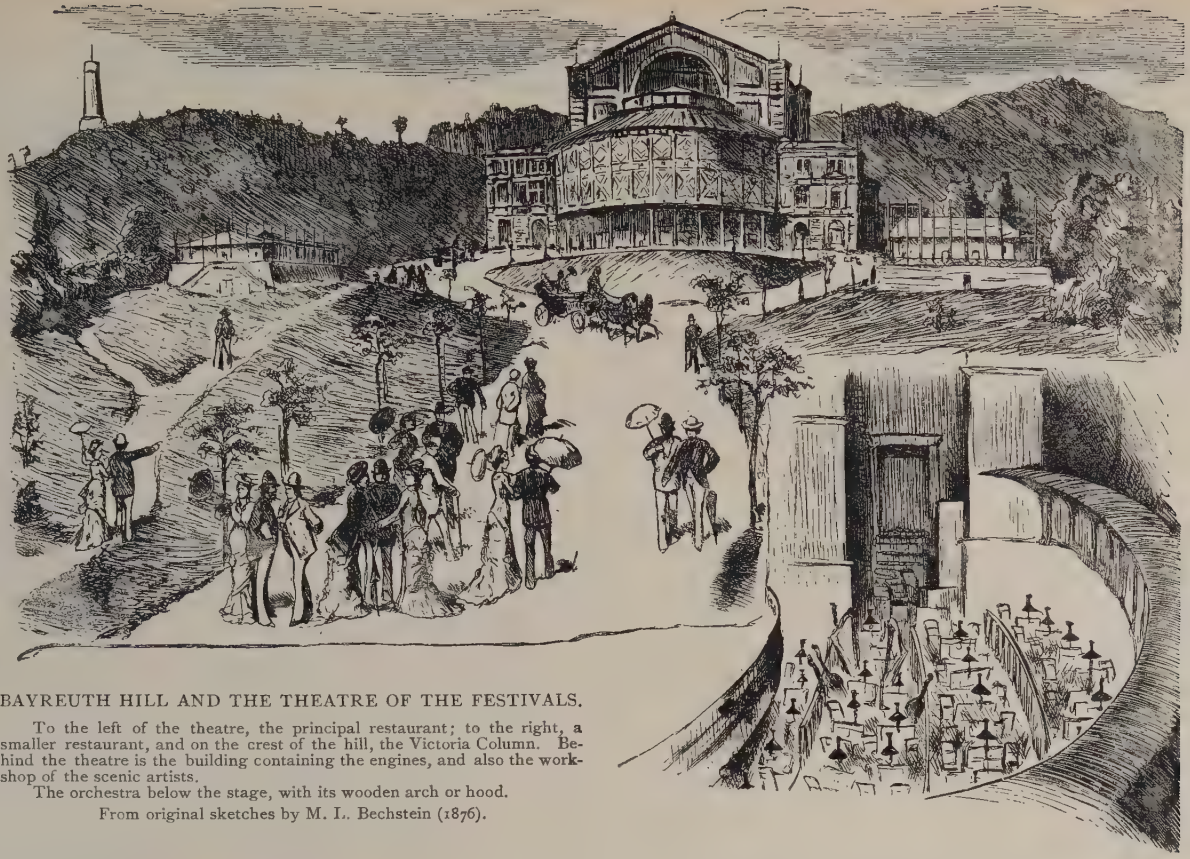
by founding the symphonic omnipotence of orchestra and words in his new art work. He had also published about the same time, in April, 1870, a pamphlet on the execution of the dramatic festival of *The Nibelungen Ring*, in which he explained all the conditions which he believed indispen-

tered himself that a portion of the millions paid by the French, would be devoted to founding his *ideal theatre*. Certain German biographers even assert that in 1870, he tried, out of resentment for *Tannhäuser's* failure in Paris, to induce King Ludwig II. to ally himself with Prussia against us. But proofs of this statement are wanting; and are there not enough grievances to be found in Wagner's authentic writings, without having recourse to imaginations like this?

sable in order to attain to the supreme end of art, which was, according to his idea, to transport the spectator from the real to an imaginary world, by making him live the life of the heroes on the stage before him.

He would no longer put up with the ordinary resources of the musical art. He demanded many changes and innovations in the purely material means, and even modified the arrangement of the theatre itself. By darkening the room almost completely, he isolated each spectator from the rest of the assembly, and forced him to concentrate his whole attention upon the stage, where the actors, lighted from all points, seemed to move in a world unknown, supernatural. Furthermore, in order to suppress everything which might recall real life or the artifice of the theatre, he rendered the orchestra invisible to the spectator, by placing it before the stage in a pit decorated with the singular name of *Mystic Gulf*, whence sonorous waves, softened, and more perfectly blended, should be diffused insensibly through the entire room, and envelop each auditor in mysterious effluence. And it was according to these indications that Gottfried Semper had built on paper that incomparable theatre for the *Nibelungen*.[1]

[1] This invisible orchestra, the first idea of which really proceeded from Grétry — which does honor to his perspicacity without depreciating Wagner's innovation — is placed, as usual, in front of the stage but considerably below it, the loudest instruments being given the lowest level. A sort of light wooden semi-arch, or elongated hood similar to our prompter's box, runs the whole length of the stage, and entirely conceals from the audience the orchestra and its leader; the latter, however, is in full sight of all the musicians and singers. The result of this arrangement proved to be very favorable. "It was feared," says Dannreuther, "that such a disposition would destroy the delicate effects of the orchestra; it was found, on the contrary, that the most subtle details were perfectly perceptible, and that the reed instruments were heard more distinctly than ever; furthermore, the *forte* passages, which ordinarily seemed to proceed from a sudden explosion of trumpets and trombones, were somewhat refined, and thus responded to Wagner's desire." At times, indeed, these seemed to certain auditors a little too subdued and sweet.



BAYREUTH HILL AND THE THEATRE OF THE FESTIVALS.

To the left of the theatre, the principal restaurant; to the right, a smaller restaurant, and on the crest of the hill, the Victoria Column. Behind the theatre is the building containing the engines, and also the workshop of the scenic artists.

The orchestra below the stage, with its wooden arch or hood.

From original sketches by M. L. Bechstein (1876).

But where was this model theatre to be constructed? On this point Wagner hesitated. While desiring to remain on Bavarian territory, in order to preserve the advantages which the royal protection offered him, he was not favorably inclined to Munich, whose population was always hostile to him; for his dearest ambition now, was to obtain an execution of his Trilogy, far away from all political, religious, or other rivalries. It was this which made him fix upon a little town of twenty thousand inhabitants, insufficient to form an audience, but far from all enmities, sheltered from all prejudices, traditions and customs. In the month of April, 1871, he visited Bayreuth, and on the 9th of November of the same year, having taken counsel with such friends as Feustel, Gross, etc., he decided that his model theatre should be erected in this tranquil, out-of-the-way spot.

The municipality of Bayreuth, a city three quarters Protestant, and devoted to the national liberal party, could hardly fail to be interested in this project, which was to awaken within it the artistic life which had slumbered for so long; it graciously made Wagner a gift of the two lots necessary for his theatre and for the house which he was to build in the suburbs. It was in 1872 that Lucerne was abandoned for Bayreuth, and Mme. Wagner wrote on April 22d to Mme. Mendès-Gautier: "One last word from Triebschen, my dear friend, which we leave with full hearts and anxious minds. To-morrow Wagner goes to Bayreuth; I follow him with the children and *Rus* in a week. We could not leave without sending you our affectionate remembrances and best wishes."[1]

[1] *Richard Wagner*, Mme. Judith Gautier. — The member of the family which responded to the name of *Rus* was a magnificent black Newfoundland, for whom Wagner had quite a paternal affection. He always had a passion for animals, particularly dogs, and it is often recounted how the composition of the *Meistersinger* was interrupted for some little time by a bite which Wagner received in his right hand from a miserable stray dog which he picked up and cared for at Zurich. The wound was sufficiently serious to prevent him from writing, and as he could not

THE WALKÜRE.

Sieglinda and Siegmund.—Act I.

In order to realize the necessary sum placed at three hundred thousand thalers, Wagner adopted the plan of one of his most zealous partisans, the pianist Carl Tausig, who placed on subscription a thousand patronage shares of three hundred thalers, giving each holder the right to attend the three series of performances of the Trilogy, twelve in all; a third of a subscription entitled the holder to a single series. A certain number of these shares had already been subscribed for, when Tausig was stricken down with typhoid fever, which carried him off in July, 1871. In June of the same year, Emil Heckel started the system of Wagnerian Associations, and founded one himself at Mannheim; the experiment immediately proved that there were in all parts of Germany, and even outside it, many people ready to furnish their share of both labor and money, who would not have been able to put out the three hundred thalers.

A committee presided over by Frederick Feustel, a rich banker of Southern Germany, and composed of Adolph Gross, Theodore Muncker, Emil Heckel and Frederick Schön, gave the liveliest impulse to the societies which were then forming all over Germany and her colonies, also in Saint Petersburg, Varsovie, New York, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, Milan, London, indeed all over the world, for the purpose of recruiting adherents, and receiving subscriptions for the performance of *The Nibelungen*. The members of these societies, united under the name of *Wagnerverein*, organized entertainments for the benefit of the undertaking, and the master himself made a tour through Germany, giving concerts composed of fragments from the Trilogy, at Mannheim, Vienna, Hamburg, Schwerin, Berlin,

dictate his music, he was reduced to an inaction which must have been terribly trying to him; but the unfortunate sick dog was cared for none the less kindly. "When a dog has received a good education," says the Wagner of *Faust*, "he interests even a sage."

Cologne, etc., attending banquets and making speeches to enflame the zeal of the subscribers. Wagner was now in his zenith, and the whole universe, marvellous spectacle, was roused to activity in helping him to realize his gigantic projects.

The corner-stone of the Theatre of the Festivals was laid by Wagner with great ceremony, on the summit of the Bayreuth hill, May 22, 1872, his sixty-ninth birthday. On the same day he received a telegram from King Ludwig: "On this day of such great importance to all Germany, I send you, dear friend, from the depths of my heart, my warmest and most sincere congratulations. Greetings and blessings to this grand enterprise of the coming year. To-day, more than ever, I am with you in the spirit." Nearly two thousand musicians and singers had come to take part in this ceremony, and had, in a manner, encouraged the composer's illusions, who flattered himself that he would be able to bring out his Trilogy in the spring of 1874.

In order to worthily celebrate this great day, a concert was given in the little old theatre of the Margraves of Bayreuth, where Richard Wagner directed the execution of his *Kaisermarsch*, and the Ninth Symphony, arranged to suit himself, with the addition of brass instruments in the *Scherzo* passage, where he found the reed instruments insufficient, and other minor changes. "This symphony," said he, "is the ideal stepping-stone of the national art, which is going to give to the victorious German people the first example of a grand scenic festival, of a dramatic and musical representation which is perfection itself." Some days later, Mme. Wagner wrote to Mme. Gautier: "Our festival is over, and in spite of very bad weather, it has been magnificent. The words which Beethoven sang to us: 'All men become brothers!' were realized during these few days at Bayreuth, where from every corner of the globe were assembled

our friends, known or unknown, all having the same thought, the same faith. . . ."

In order to give great lustre to this ceremony, Wagner had called upon all the willing musicians and singers in Germany; he required only three hundred; more than four hundred responded to his call. When the fête was over, he drew up a sort of proclamation to his people, — a veritable sovereign in this musical realm: "In saying farewell to the members of this superb reunion of artists, who, in these happy days of May, coming from many a distant land, have gathered about me to celebrate our great Beethoven, it has been impossible for me to shake each one by the hand, and it is equally difficult to address to them now, even in writing, this farewell benediction. I thank my friends, singers and musicians, who, from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West, from Berlin to Vienna, from Pesth to Mannheim, have responded to my invitation for this noble artistic festival."

Written and published at Bayreuth, May 24, 1872.

SIEGFRIED AND THE DRAGON AWAITING THE HOUR OF COMBAT.
(From *Schultze and Mueller, The Nibelungen Ring*, 1883.)

CHAPTER XII

NIBELUNGEN RING AT BAYREUTH

T is myself and my friends," proudly wrote Wagner in *The Work and Mission of my Life*, in 1879, "who have been able to carry out such a colossal enterprise." He then proceeds to enlarge upon his idea. "Never was such a work accomplished, in the midst of the greatest difficulties and anxieties, in spite of the most narrow-minded opposition, as when the ideal Theatre was finally erected at Bayreuth. It was desired to unite there, from among the most precious resources of the stage, all that could contribute in the slightest degree to the success of the first celebration of a great German dramatic festival; of a solemnity which, notwithstanding all obstacles, was essentially consistent with the true principals of art, — the triple representation of the four parts of my *Ring of the Nibelungen* in the summer of 1876." Intoxicated by his triumph, he apparently forgot what he had written ten years before, apropos of *Rienzi:* "My nature as well as my destiny have vowed me to the concentration and the solitude of labor, *and I feel myself totally unsuited to all outside enterprises.*"

A very legitimate pride, all things considered, after so many difficulties conquered, so many obstacles surmounted. This ceremony of May 22, 1872, which seemed to announce Wagner's definite success, provoked a violent crusade against

him on the part of his enemies, and particularly the Jews, who were by no means disarmed. They were exasperated by the prospect of his near triumph, and they dealt him some furious blows. Towards the end of the year, a physician, whose race is sufficiently indicated by his name, Dr. Puschmann, published a consultation which nobody had asked of him, and which was intended to prove nothing more nor less than the insanity of Richard Wagner. He proclaimed that he had deeply admired the Wagner of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, but that the creative force of the master had been exhausted since his stay at Munich, where were exhibited the first symptoms of his madness. Dating from this epoch, he declared, the artist had had the sad consciousness of his impotence, and all the efforts which he had made to arouse his genius, had only ended in disorderly and incoherent results. This remarkable doctor asserted also that he had recognized two diagnostic signs of Richard Wagner's insanity; first the excessive pride and mania for grandeur, which prevented the patient from seeing anything noble or worthy outside of himself; second, and worst of all, the persecution delirium, which made him discover "a Jew in ambush wherever his productions failed to obtain the grand success of which he believed himself sure..." We will not dwell upon these exhibitions of resentment; it is necessary to go back to the day when such offensive attacks were published, even in the serious journals of Germany, in order to show the bitter hatred which these people entertained for him.

About this time, as it was announced that Wagner was going to Cologne, and thus venture into the camp of his most bitter enemies, Ferdinand Hiller sharply wrote that it would require no courage on Wagner's part, to come to a city like Cologne, where *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* were played with great success, and where he was sure to be

received as a hero. "But," added he, "since the party has done me the honor to treat me as an adversary, and proscribed me as such, I feel no longer called upon to deny that the greater part of what Wagner has written, composed and undertaken, irritates me exceedingly. I must call to mind, however, that I have made known to the public, by excellent renderings, his principal concert compositions. To see Wagner directing one of his own works must be as interesting to his adversaries as to his partisans, particularly as he will wield on such an occasion the baton of a leader of an orchestra, not of German prose." From this final thrust it would seem that Ferdinand Hiller, of Hebrew origin, was not in the humor to forgive Wagner for his violent attack against the Jews.

This rising in arms did not prevent the Bayreuth theatre from being built, although something else threatened to do so. It was not enough to have the corner-stone laid, and in spite of all the zeal of disciples and adherents, the subscriptions were slow in coming in, and the proceeds from the concerts were only enough to erect the outside of the building, leaving nothing for the interior. Of the three hundred thousand thalers which the shares were expected to furnish, it had been easy enough to collect a third, and the work had been commenced immediately; but this point once attained, the money stopped coming; confidence seemed to be lost. Then Wagner's good genuis, King Ludwig, came again to his aid. He advanced the two hundred thousand thalers which were lacking, on condition that he should be repaid from the future sale of the shares. The final success of the enterprise was then assured. They could proceed with the decorations, the machinery, and all the interior furnishings. The enterprise received a new impulse, and the representations were definitely fixed for the spring of 1876.

Wagner, however, even after this offer from the king, continued to work actively for Bayreuth. Early in March 1875, he went with Liszt to Pesth, where the two gave a grand concert for the benefit of the new theatre. It appeared that the father-in-law and the son-in-law each drew after him his cohort of admirers, armed with flatteries and enthusiastic homages, and that Liszt's army of followers carried things with so high a hand that Wagner took offense and abruptly left town, first countermanding a banquet which had been planned in his honor. Some days after, he went to Vienna, where he directed several concerts for the Bayreuth work, and saw himself called to account by certain journals, for giving the lie to his own theories in cutting up his works and having selections from them performed in concert. "The scarcity of money," said they, "the necessity of being ready for the supreme day of glory which he has fixed for himself, could alone constrain him to impose upon himself such a flat contradiction."

At the close of the same year, 1875, Wagner returned to Vienna, to superintend a revival of his opera of *Tannhäuser*, with modifications new to Germany. For one thing, he had introduced the grand *bacchanale* written at Paris for the first tableau, a change easy to understand, since this piece was quite consistent with his most recent manner. But besides this, he had reduced the overture to the proportions of a simple introduction, blended with the first scene of the work by means of the symphonic development of the Venusberg motives; the repetition of the song of the pilgrims was thus suppressed, with that famous phrase of the violins, more than a hundred times repeated, which had provoked such violent discussions. At the end of the performance, Wagner, who sat in one of the proscenium boxes, felt impelled to respond to the applause by making a little speech. He thanked the public for its attitude,

the artists for their zeal, and concluded with these unexpected words: "May the success continue, at least in proportion to the talents which have been put at my disposal!"

Thereupon, a great flutter in the musical world of Vienna, which had no relish for these superb and disdainful airs, and a marked coolness on the part of the public, already disconcerted by this mutilation of a favorite overture. *Tannhäuser*, thus remodelled, was played only twice, and a few days after, they were thrown back upon *Lohengrin;* Wagner still presided over the *mise en scène;* but he left Vienna the day after the performance, and did not attempt, this time, to make a speech. In March, 1876, he went to Berlin, to superintend the first performance in that city, of *Tristan and Isolde*. After the first act, the master received a hearty ovation; but what touched him much more than the bravos, was the fact that the emperor, present with all his court, had permitted the entire receipts to apply to the colossal enterprise at Bayreuth: five months more, and the dream would become a reality![1]

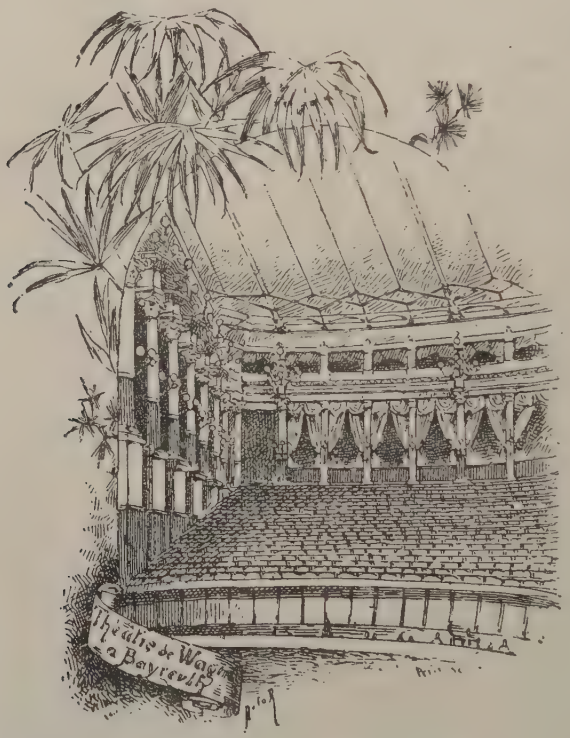
Meanwhile, Wagner had received from the other side of the Atlantic, a proposition highly advantageous from a pecuniary standpoint, and very flattering in its proof of his many adherents and admirers in the New World.[2] The

[1] In regard to the cut on the opposite page, it should be observed that the rounded façade has been modified, as is explained farther on. The high part of the theatre, corresponding with the stage, is here too high proportionally for the rest of the building; as to the decoration of the grounds before the theatre, with marble balustrades, statues and fountains, that existed perhaps on paper, but it has not yet been realized. The theatre is reached by a winding path, bordered with small trees, as is shown in the cut on page 259. The little sketch at the top of the picture on the opposite page represents the *sgraffito* over the principal entrance of Wagner's house at Bayreuth.

[2] Previously, in 1872, the city of Chicago, regarding him as a curiosity, had offered him $100,000 to come there and direct a number of his works; but he had declined this offer, pleading that the building of the Bayreuth theatre was occupying his whole attention, and prevented him from making so long a voyage.

EXTERIOR OF THE BAYREUTH THEATRE IN 1876.

United States were getting ready to celebrate, in 1876, their Declaration of Independence, and a number of Wagner's fanatical partisans had conceived the idea of requesting him to compose a Grand Festival March, to be played at the opening of the International Exposition at Philadelphia and



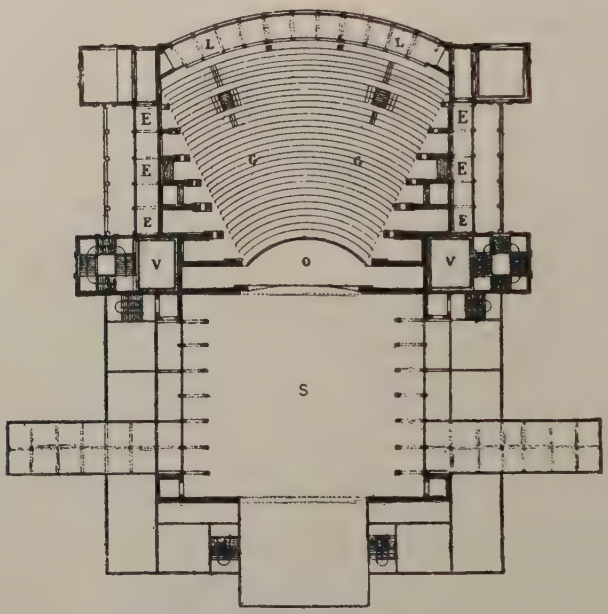
A CORNER OF THE BAYREUTH THEATRE.
After an original sketch.

for which they offered him the enormous sum of five thousand dollars. What an unexpected stroke of fortune! It is needless to say that Wagner accepted. This march, played at Philadelphia on May 10, 1876, is a very brilliant and very noisy composition, intended to be performed only in the open air. The first movement, built upon an American

REPRESENTATION OF THE "NIBELUNGEN RING," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1876.

Alberich and the Rhinedaughters, first scene of the *Rheingold*.
From a drawing by M. Knut Ekwall.

theme, is a superb piece of orchestration, and the conclusion is made grandly effective by an unique combination of this popular air with a song of Wagner's own conception. He gallantly dedicated this march to the Ladies' Committee of Philadelphia, with an epigraph borrowed from Goethe: "He alone deserves freedom and existence who daily conquers

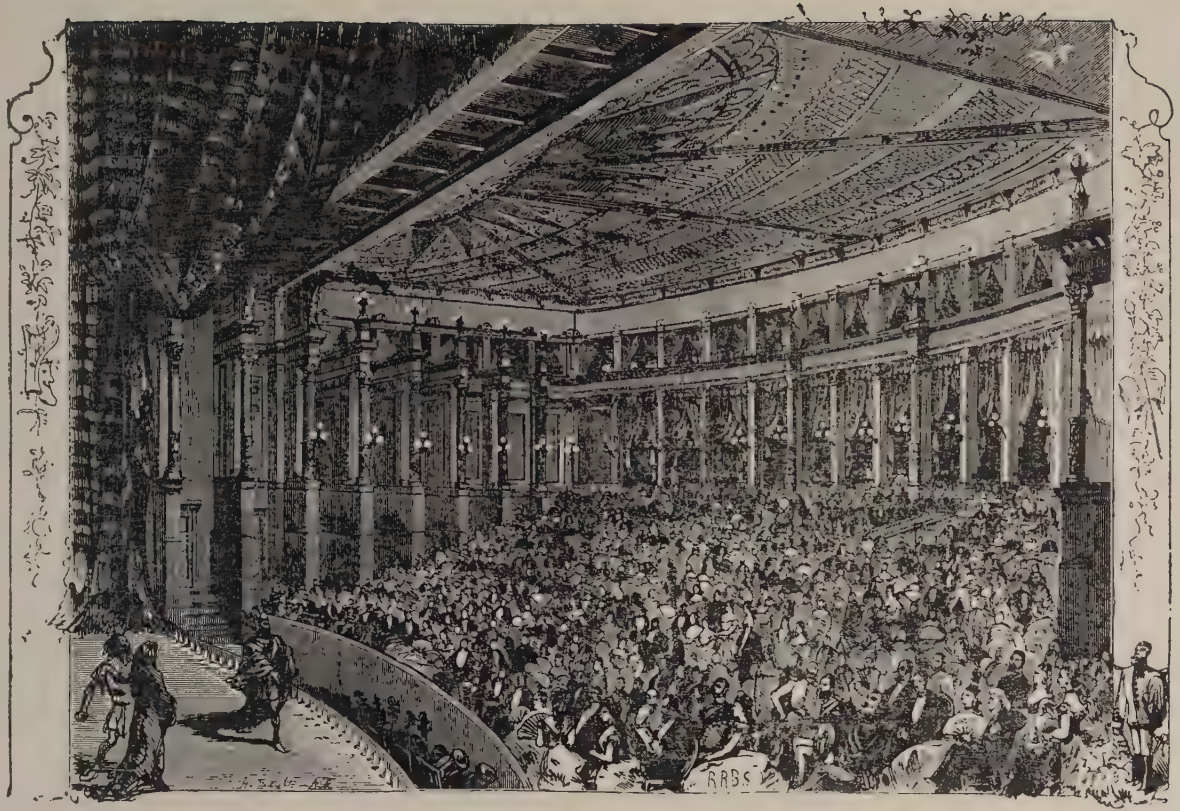


PLAN OF THE BAYREUTH THEATRE.

E. Entrance.
L. Loges.
G. Amphitheatre.
O. Orchestra.
V. Vestibule.
S. Stage.

them." For five thousand dollars the beautiful American ladies would perhaps have preferred a dance, with or without the quotation from Goethe.[1]

[1] The view of the Bayreuth theatre shown on the opposite page, is very correct as to the architecture, and it is, on the whole, the one which gives the best idea of the *ensemble*; but what inaccuracy of detail! In the first place, the auditorium is entirely a work of the imagination. Besides the fact that the spectators were not permitted to leave their seats and move about during the performance, the room



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE BAYREUTH THEATRE

During a performance of the *Rheingold*. (On the stage are Wotan and the two giants Fasolt and Fafner.)

Wagner thus came into possession of a snug little sum, which, as he was always pressed for money, did not come amiss. But he never felt particularly proud of his part of the transaction, and when this march was played in London in 1877, he thought it well to give his friends a few words of explanation in an informal talk, in which he said among other interesting things, "I am not a learned musician; I never had occasion to make antiquarian researches, and the periods of transition have but a moderate interest for me. I have gone straight through from Palestrina to Bach, from Bach to Gluck and Mozart, or, if you prefer, I have traversed these same stages backwards, from Mozart to Palestrina. It suited me personally to content myself with the principal masters — the heroes — and their most important creations. That this system may have had its disadvantages, is quite possible; at all events, my mind has never been crammed with music in general. . . ." All this preamble was simply designed to lead up to the following conclusion, essential in his eyes: "Not being a learned musician, I have never been able to write to order. If a subject does not interest me, and completely absorb me, I am incapable of writing twenty measures which are worth the trouble of listening to." As to this, however, people will claim the privilege of judging for themselves.

After a long period of incubation during which the master had selected from all parts of Germany the artists best adapted to personify his gods and his heroes,[1] after

was made quite dark, in obedience to Wagner's instructions, and it would have been impossible to distinguish so many beautiful dresses and fine uniforms. Furthermore the curtain is not rightly placed, nor could the musicians be seen from the stage, only the conductor being visible to the singers.

[1] In this connection, the newspapers had many ill-natured things to say. They asserted that Wagner demanded of the singers whom he honored with his choice, to attend during the two years all necessary rehearsals, and finally to assemble at the formal representations, without remuneration, but out of pure devotion to him-

two months of preparatory rehearsals, it was at last possible to fix definitely the dates of the first representation of the four sections of the *Ring of the Nibelungen*, for the 13th to the 17th of August, 1876; two other executions of the entire Trilogy were announced for the 20th to the 23d, and for the 27th to the 30th. On the 6th of the month, the king of Bavaria arrived at Bayreuth, for the purpose of witnessing the general rehearsals. At first he insisted on being the sole auditor, but the acoustics were so bad in the great empty room, that he was prayed to relent. He did so, and suggested that they should allow anybody and everybody to come in, and that things should proceed absolutely as if he were not there. This plan resulted in such a tumultuous crowd that the police had to be called to establish order. Then a happy thought struck somebody to ask an admission fee of twenty-five marks for the remaining rehearsals, which produced a supplementary receipt of twenty thousand marks.

On the evening of the 12th of August, when the little Frankonian town was filled to overflowing with ardent enthusiasts, come from all parts of the world, or the simply curious, attracted by the novelty of the enterprise (the principal contingent, outside of the seventy-three orchestral leaders, was furnished by directors, intendants, actors and other members of the theatrical world), a special train arrived, bearing the Emperor of Germany, whom the count of Holnstein went to receive and to compliment in the name of the king. The emperor shook hands with the count, with the

self and his works. They added that certain artists, like Niemann, Betz and Scaria, being otherwise handsomely endowed, had consented, but that many others, having no fine engagements to depend upon, were obliged to refuse, and that this refusal had drawn from Mme. Wagner some very indignant letters, in which she inveighed against *the egotistical race of comedians with no mind or inclination for the ideal*. All these malicious reports had the effect of making the master's task much more difficult in many respects.

burgomaster of Bayreuth, with other official personages, and even with Richard Wagner, who was there as if by accident. Immediately the king of Bavaria left Bayreuth, offended, some said, because the emperor had not accepted his invitation for the general rehearsals; possibly he preferred not to meet the old sovereign, through some feeling of pride, or ill-will.

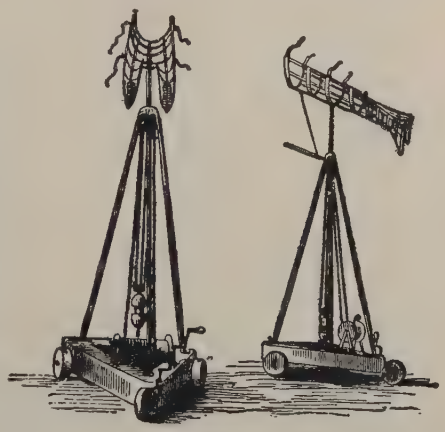
However, there was no lack of crowned heads at this festival, Wagner having convoked all the princes of Germany, as well as foreign sovereigns, not forgetting the viceroy of Egypt, and the sultan Abdul-Aziz.

The theatre was built to conform as nearly as possible to the ancient Greek amphitheatre. The parquet accommodates over thirteen hundred people. Just above the last row of seats in the parquet, and extending the entire width of the room is the box of honor (Fürsten-Gallerie), which is designed for sovereigns and princes, and is divided into nine apartments. Over this is another gallery containing two hundred chairs, so that the entire room will seat about fifteen hundred people. There are no boxes or seats on the sides; nothing but columns in the style of the Renaissance, to break the monotonous aspect of bare walls. Sixteen broad passages, eight on each side, make it possible for the audience and orchestra to leave the theatre in less than two minutes. Little, or no decoration, not a bit of drapery in the room, no chandelier; overhead, some ground-glass globes give just enough light to enable the spectators to reach their places, but which is entirely extinguished when the performance begins. No red curtain; no prompter's box; no footlights visible from the audience-room; in short, a radical suppression of everything suggestive of the conventional theatre, in order to plunge the spectator into the most complete illusion possible.

After the emperor of Germany, occupying the place of honor in the *Fürsten-Gallerie*, one might have seen the em-

peror and empress of Brazil, the grand duke and grand duchess of Baden, the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the duke of Anhalt-Dessau, prince George of Prussia, finally the grand duke of Saxe-Weimar, a friend of Lizst and a decided admirer of Wagner, and who, two years before, had directed his capellmeister, Edward Lassen, to superintend two model representations of *Tristan and Isolde.*

Unfortunately, the German emperor, who had no music in his composition, and who had allowed himself to be persuaded that his presence was indispensable at this grand manifestation of German National Art, could not stand the strain on his nerves, and left town after the second day — a slight which Wagner was not the man to forgive. The viceroy of Egypt and the sultan did not come; the latter, indeed, had suddenly lost his throne in the meantime, and passed from life to death in a rather mysterious manner.[1]



NATATORY APPARATUS OF THE RHINE-DAUGHTERS.

The first idea of the *Ring of the Nibelungen*, the subject of which is borrowed from the ancient Scandinavian and Germanic legends of

[1] At the first series, the indisposition of Betz, who played the rôle of Wotan, necessitated an interval of a day between the *Walküre* and *Siegfried*; but after that the four parts were played on four consecutive days. The performances commenced at four o'clock, except for the *Rheingold*, which commenced at quarter past seven. In the *Walküre* there was an *entr'acte* of an hour between the first and second acts. For all the pieces, instead of the three traditional raps at the beginning of the acts, each act was announced by a trumpet call from the exterior balconies, reproducing certain motives characteristic of the work, and which was heard even inside the audience-hall.

the *Eddas* of the *Nibelungen* and of *Gudrun*, dates back to the year 1848. It was then that Wagner, during a summer outing in the country, had written the poem of *The Death of Siegfried*, which later became *The Götterdämmerung;* but at that epoch he did not dream of making a Trilogy. After the success of *Lohengrin* and the warm friendship of Liszt had given him courage, he had harbored for a moment,

MANŒUVRES OF THE RHINEDAUGHTERS. VIEW UNDERNEATH THE STAGE.

as we have seen, the project of writing a *Wieland le forgeron;* but he abandoned this idea and returned to the *Nibelungen.* The general plan of it is outlined in his *Communication to my Friends*, published in November, 1851, in which he indicated the principal events of his life and the motives which led him to this conception of a musical drama. It was his purpose, he said, to develop the mythical tale in three complete dramas, preceded by a grand prologue. These dramas, although each would form a distinct whole,

were not to be treated as separate repertoire operas, in the absolute sense of the term; on the contrary, he had quite a different plan in view for the execution of his cycle, and meant that it should be performed as a series of four formal festivals, on four consecutive days.

Furthermore, — and this statement is not without importance — he would consider the aim of this enterprise attained, if it could succeed, in four days, in communicating at least the sentiment of his work to the people assembled to hear it, and any repetition of the performances seemed to him unimportant. "Such is my plan," he concluded, "and my friends must see that it cannot be realized under the present condition of things. If they will take this idea into their minds, and reflect upon the manner in which this project ought to be carried out, they will be able to aid me very much. I therefore give them time and leisure to think it over, for I will not speak of it again to them until the work is finished.[1]

WAGNER HOBNOBBING WITH HIS FRIENDS.
After an original sketch.

In 1853, he had had his complete poem printed for himself, and had given it to only a few of his friends; he sent

[1] The most devoted and most active friends of the author at this period, were Th. Uhlig, Franz Brendel, Peter Cornelius, Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Carl Tausig, etc., etc.

a copy of it to Schopenhauer, who immediately covered it with philologic and philosophic literary notes. Finally, in 1863, the poem of *The Ring of the Nibelungen* was put on the market, and Wagner uttered in the preface that despairing cry of appeal which fell like a voice from Heaven upon the ear of an eighteen-year-old prince.

Through this poem of the *Nibelungen*, Wagner made the historic, poetic, legendary, and even mythical traditions of the German people live once more upon the stage. Hitherto, he had kept to the Middle Ages, depicting the old chivalric and feudal life in *Tannhäuser*, in *Lohengrin*, in *Tristan and Isolde*, and municipal and domestic life in the *Meistersinger*. When it came to writing the *Ring of the Nibelungen*, he went back of these scenes to the most ancient of Germanic traditions, to the heroic and even to the mythologic period. Nor was he content to take the legend of the *Nibelungen* as it is found in the German poem of the twelfth century, in which the ancient gods have already disappeared to make room for Christianity; in which the old rudeness of manner and custom has been much softened by chivalric and Christian ideas. He had sought out the legend in its most primitive forms, in the *Eddas* and the *Sagas* of Iceland, where it is found as a spontaneous creation of the popular imagination, with no attempt at literary form, and where the barbaric customs are displayed in all their grand and rugged wildness. Wagner has partaken of the very essence of mythology and of the supernatural, as a preparation for this poem, while giving to his personages a moral development superior to that of the heroes of barbaric times, by making them more complete, more human; he has also added to the drama a philosophic meaning, of which the legend possesses nothing but the possibility. In order to give to the events and to the personages this high symbolic import, preserving at the same

time their local color and their heroic character, it was absolutely necessary to place them in a semi-fantastic framework; and this fact the author fully appreciated.[1]

In the pre-historic times in which the action takes place, three races peopled the world — the Dwarfs (Nibelungen), in subterranean caves, the Giants (Riesen) on the surface of the globe, and the Gods (Götter) in the celestial regions. As yet, all live in peace, but strife and discord are at hand, and it is gold, the emblem of power, which is to be the cause of all the approaching calamities. Gods, Giants and Dwarfs all scheme and scramble for it, and it is just this struggle between the three races which Wagner has undertaken to dramatize in his Trilogy. At the opening of the drama, the gold is in the possession of the Gods, whose master, Wotan, has confided to three daughters of the Rhine the keeping of this precious treasure, — doubly precious, since omnipotence will be given to him who shall succeed in forging a ring from it.

Alberich, chief of the dwarfs, who has discovered this secret, fulfills the requisite conditions, obtains possession of the gold, and disappears with it, pursued by the despairing cries of the three sisters. Meanwhile, the Gods have commanded the Giants to build them a palace, Walhalla. As a recompense for their labor, the Giants demand that Freia, the Goddess of Youth, shall be delivered to them. The Gods are not willing to part with one who makes them eternally young and strong; but Wotan, held to his word, is about to deliver the goddess to the giants Fasolt and Fafner, when the latter, stirred by the tales of Loge, the fire-god, consent to abandon Freia, on condition that they shall have all the treasures of the Nibelungen; not placing much faith in the Gods, they take the precaution to hold

[1] G. Monod, *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, a study in the *Courrier littéraire* (Oct. 10, 1876).

Freia as a pledge, and immediately the Gods feel themselves begin to weaken and grow old. Then Wotan and Loge descend into Nibelheim, in order to gain possession of the treasure which Alberich has just seized from the Rhine-daughters, and which has given him sovereign power over the whole race of dwarfs.

Alberich, confident in his power, displays to the two visitors all his treasures, among others a magic helmet (tarn-helm) which renders invisible the warrior who wears it. In order to prove the truth of his words, he disappears from view; then he transforms himself into a serpent. The crafty Loge lays a trap for him, by asking if he can change into a toad; Alberich does so, and immediately Wotan places his foot upon him, while Loge captures the tarnhelm. The two visitors having bound Alberich, carry him away to the realm of the Gods. Once taken prisoner, there is nothing left for Alberich but to obey. He orders all the Nibelungen treasures brought, in order that the Gods may regain their youth, with the return of Freia; Wotan wrests from him even the magic ring, and Alberich, furious, sets this curse upon it; "Cursing, I forged this ring; may it be forever cursed in the world, and henceforth bring death to him who holds it!"

Wotan, who has no disturbing scruples, takes the ring; but the Giants, notwithstanding their piles of gold, refuse to deliver up Freia, unless the ring also be given to them. Wotan is obliged to yield it up, though not without first consulting the prophetess Erda, goddess of the earth, and mother of the Gods. Scarcely have the Giants touched the ring than Alberich's terrible prediction is verified. The two brothers, Fafner and Fasolt contend for the possession of it, and Fafner slays Fasolt. Murder has entered into the world, and this crime rests heavily on Wotan's conscience But Freia remains to the Gods; they have regained their

youth, they have seen their palace built. At a blow from Donner, the god of thunder, a brilliant rainbow spans the purified heavens, and forms a triumphal arch over which the Gods pass to Walhalla, while from the depths of the waves a desolate song arises from the nymphs of the Rhine, dispossessed of their treasure. Such is the prologue of the Trilogy, entitled *The Rheingold.*

Some important events have taken place since the scenes of *The Rheingold*, before the commencement of *The Walküre*, the first part of the Trilogy. The prophetess Erda, again consulted by Wotan, has predicted the downfall of the Gods; she has also revealed to him, that from his love with a mortal shall spring a mighty hero destined to regenerate the world by his exploits, and to get back the Nibelungen treasure, now the booty of the giant Fafner. From Wotan's love with a woman, twins are born; the mother dies. The daughter, Sieglinda, a prisoner, is forced to become the spouse and slave of Hunding, a hunter; the son, Siegmund, seeks adventures. The two young people have not met since their infancy, and have no knowledge of each other. But at the moment of Sieglinda's marriage, Wotan has appeared to his daughter, and burying a massive sword in the trunk of an ash tree, has announced to her that this weapon will assure victory to the man strong enough to wrest it from the tree,

BETZ REHEARSING THE RÔLE OF WOTAN, UNDER WAGNER'S INSTRUCTION.
After an original sketch.

and that this man shall deliver Sieglinda. She impatiently awaits her liberator.

At the opening of the first scene, a man rushes in, wounded, his clothing in tatters; it is Siegmund, who is fleeing from his enemies, and whom chance has brought to his sister's dwelling. Sieglinda receives and cares for the fugitive, ignorant that it is her brother. As they recount their misfortunes, they feel their hearts respond with the warmest sympathy for each other. At this moment Hunding arrives, who, finding the enemy of his race at his fireside, challenges him to combat on the morrow, the laws of hospitality requiring that he shall give him shelter at least through the night. He departs, leading Sieglinda by the hand; but the latter leaves her sleeping husband, returns to Siegmund, and reveals her love to him. Siegmund, his heart torn with an equal passion, bounds towards the ash tree, and by a supreme effort, wrests from it the sword, which he christens immediately with the sad name of *Nothung* (distress) in memory of his past life. At this great deed, Sieglinda cries; "I recognize thee; thou art Seigmund, the beloved brother of my dreams; I am thine!" And Siegmund replies, "Thou hast said it; a sister and a true love, — I find them both in thee!" The two lovers flee together, and Hunding follows them in furious pursuit.

The second act opens with a grand counsel of the Gods assembled in their palace. Wotan, well disposed towards his son Siegmund, wishes to defend him in his combat with Hunding. He calls to him Brunhilda, the bravest and most beautiful of the nine Walküres, those warrior maidens who sustain heroes during combats, and conduct them, after death, to Walhalla. He commands Brunhilda to descend upon the earth, in order to protect Siegmund in his struggle against Hunding. But he soon changes his mind, upon the earnest remonstrances of his wife Fricka, indignant at

THE HOME OF HUNDING.

Act I of the *Walküre*.—After an original sketch by Joseph Hoffmann.

the sacrilege committed by Siegmund, and his cowardly flight before Hunding. It is settled; Siegmund must perish, and it is Brunhilda, the Walküre, who is to watch over the fulfillment of this decree. She allows herself, however, to be touched by the nobleness of the young hero's love, and, in the thickest of the combat, against the command of Wotan, she parries Hunding's blows with her shield. But Wotan, suddenly appearing, breaks with his all-powerful lance the sword of Siegmund, who falls, mortally wounded by Hunding. Brunhilda picks up the broken pieces of the sword, and supporting the fainting Sieglinda, she goes to join her sisters upon the rocks of Brünhildenstein. There, Sieglinda wishes to die, but Brunhilda commands her to live for the hero whom she will bring forth. Accordingly Sieglinda flees upon Brunhilda's horse, carrying with her the fragments of the sword, and the Walküre remains to stand her trial before her father. The latter resists the supplications of the sisters of the guilty one, and declares that she must be punished for her disobedience to his orders. He expels her from the company of the Walküres, and banishes her to a barren rock, where she shall be given in marriage to the man who shall find her there and wake her. But she begs Wotan to surround the rock with inextinguishable flames, so that only the bravest of heroes may win her.

This hero will be Siegfried, son of Siegmund and Sieglinda, and grandson of Wotan. Siegfried, whose mother dies at his birth, is brought up by the dwarf Mime, brother of Alberich, who dreams always of recovering the Nibelungen treasure. This treasure is guarded by the giant Fafner, transformed into a dragon. The cunning Mime, seeing what marvellous power and courage are developing in Siegfried, quickly comprehends that this descendant of Wotan is alone able to slay Fafner; after which, he, Mime, will soon throw the young hero into a lethargic sleep, and

COSTUME OF BRUNHILDA, IN THE "WALKÜRE."

steal from him the magic helmet and the ring which he shall have conquered. But, in order to kill this dragon, a mighty sword must be forged. Mime makes several, and Siegfried snaps them all as if they were straws. At last the young Volsung succeeds in forging an invincible weapon with the fragments of Siegmund's sword, which Sieglinda, when dying, had given to Mime at the same time that she confided to him her son.

RICHARD WAGNER'S DREAM.

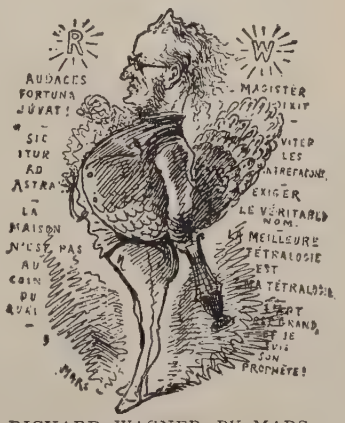
Jupiter, escorted by Venus, lays down his thunderbolts, and makes submission, in the name of Olympus, to Wotan in the form of Richard Wagner, who is going to take his turn at stunning the world, while dame Freia (Venus) will receive the golden rain.

(Grætz, *Der Floh*, Vienna, Aug. 20, 1876.)

Siegfried goes forth to conquer the treasure, but before attacking Fafner, he seats himself in the shade of a linden-tree before his enemy's cave, and falls to wondering about many things; he listens to the voices of the forest, and forgets Fafner in trying to imitate the songs of the birds. At last he rouses himself from this sweet revery, and sounds a *fanfare* upon his silver horn. At this call, the dragon appears. Siegfried challenges him, and pierces him through and through with his sword. Some drops of blood from the monster have spurted upon the hero's hand. He involuntarily carries them to his lips, and O marvellous! They have revealed to him the language of the birds. One of them warns him against Mime's treachery, and points out to him the

treasure in the dragon's cave. Upon this, he kills Mime, and takes from the treasure the ring and the tarnhelm. Then he consults the birds again, who counsel him to win for himself Brunhilda, the most beautiful of women; Siegfried flies to this new exploit.

At this unexpected stroke, Wotan, already tired of his divinity and who walks the earth as an unknown traveller, fears lest the hero whom he has raised up for the salvation of the Gods shall be the cause of their final destruction. Again he evokes Erda, and tries to force her to reveal to him the future; but Erda can tell him nothing more, and Wotan, irritated, plunges her back into an eternal sleep. He tries to oppose in person the triumphal march of Siegfried; but his wooden lance is now shattered under the blows of the sword which it had once broken in Siegmund's hands and Siegfried, penetrating the raging flames, reaches Brunhilda, and wakes her with a kiss. She joyfully recognizes Siegfried as the noblest hero of the Volsung race, and yields herself to him.



RICHARD WAGNER, BY MARS.

— Adored Public,

If you want an art, you shall have an art! My art is cumbersome, I confess it; it deafens some, I do not deny it; it simply bores others, I admit it; it is an expensive employment, that is very true; but it proceeds from my genius! . . . Encore un coup, prenez . . . my art!

(*Journal amusant*, Sept. 9, 1876.)

The last part, which tells of the catastrophe of the old mythologic world and the end of the Gods of the Eddas — whence the title *Götterdämmerung*, — takes us back upon the earth. Siegfried now leaves Brunhilda, and sallies forth to new exploits, leaving with her, as a pledge of his faith, the magic ring conquered from Fafner. He arrives at the palace of the Gibichungen, where he finds seated at table the

prince Gunther, his sister Gudrun, and his half-brother Hagen, all three children of the queen Crimhilda. Hagen, however, is a natural son, whose father is the dwarf Alberich, and he has inherited all the latter's evil qualities and criminal instincts. Knowing through his father that Siegfried possesses the ring, he determines to get it from him by means of evil arts. He inspires Gunther with love for Brunhilda, and prepares a goblet of welcome for Siegfried, which shall cause him to forget Brunhilda, and fall in love with Gudrun, who is to serve him the potion.

Meanwhile Brunhilda has received one of her sisters sent by Wotan to counsel her to give back to the Rhine-daughters the magic ring upon which depends the salvation of the Gods; but she refuses, remaining true to her vow to Siegfried. Suddenly he appears, having taken on, by aid of the tarnhelm, the figure and appearance of Gunther. He seizes her, forces from her the magic ring, and carries her to the real Gunther. The effect of the philtre has been to wipe from Siegfried's mind all recollection of Brunhilda, and when she, wedded to Gunther under the form of Siegfried, recognizes the magic ring on the finger of the true Siegfried, she divines the treachery which has been wrought against her, and loads him with the bitterest reproaches; but he remains untouched by them, and is absolutely unable to recall anything of the past. Then Brunhilda, consumed with rage and jealousy, rather than see Gudrun the wife of Siegfried, joins Gunther and Hagen in a plot to kill her faithless lover.

He is to die on the following day, at a hunt planned in his honor. Siegfried arrives first, and, following the game, wanders into a lonely rocky defile on the Rhine. Suddenly three water-sprites rise from the flood before him, and beseech him to give them back the ring. Siegfried tosses pebbles at them, and sends them back to their watery depths. Then

Hagen and the hunters arrive, and the traitor, keeping close to his prey, pours out for him a new beverage, that of remembrance, inviting him the while to recount his past adventures. Siegfried drinks, and his memory gradually returns to him; he sings of his childhood in the forest, his fight with the dragon, the winning of Brunhilda. . . . At this name, the veil is lifted, and remorse fills his soul. "Brunhilda, O my beloved!" cries he, and Hagen, only waiting for this cry of love, pierces him with his lance. They carry his body to Gunther's house, to the solemn sounds of a funeral march. Brunhilda rushes in, still loving, and heart-broken by the blow which has killed Siegfried. She has a funeral pyre built for her beloved, upon which she throws herself, while launching anathemas at Walhalla, and at the thenceforth powerless Gods. The reign of the Gods is at an end; the reign of man commences! The flames arise above Siegfried and Brunhilda, and spread rapidly. At the same moment the waves of the Rhine rise to the entrance of the hall, and the three water-sprites bear away the ring which Brunhilda has thrown to them. Hagen rushes after them to capture the treasure, but they seize him and bear him with them to the depths below. The fire reaches Walhalla, and destroys the palace of the Gods. All is consumed.

It will be seen how much more closely Wagner has adhered to the antique Scandinavian *Edda* than to the Germanic poem of the *Nibelungen*, by observing that in this poem the interest centres not upon Brunhilda, as in the primitive legend and in the opera, but upon Crimhilda, who takes the place of the Gudrun of the *Edda*. Siegfried, in this poem which comes between the legend and the opera, has never met Brunhilda before conquering her for Gunther; he loves only Crimhilda. Nor has Brunhilda any love for Siegfried; it is out of pure revenge that she aids in his

death. Wagner has managed with great cleverness these old Icelandic traditions which are repeated or contradicted in the two *Eddas* and in the *Sagas*; he has had a very difficult task to perform in constructing a simple, connected and interesting whole out of the very confused and complicated accounts which served him as a basis, and often he has added details of a very happy invention. This whole literary work does him great credit.

"As to the form of the poem," writes M. G. Monod in his paper on the origins of the language of the Trilogy, "it is very difficult for a foreigner to judge of it. It is full of archaisms, and of more or less obscure allusions to ancient mythology. The versification is no less peculiar. Several series of two-foot verses are followed by one or two three-foot verses, with no apparent rule of alternation. These verses are not rhymed, but are alliterative. Generally the alliteration consists in the accented syllables of the important words, in each line, commencing with a consonant, and presenting some analogy of sound. This is called *Stabreim*, and the effect is not unpleasant. These alliterations attract attention to the essential words of a phrase, and accent them, as it were, with special force. Notwithstanding the numerous difficulties and the obscurities of Wagner's poem, the language has seemed to me very expressive and full of color. The dramatic passages often attain to a real grandeur.[1]

Throughout the entire length of the Trilogy, except in some very short passages like the waking of Brunhilda, and the hunt in which Hagen kills Siegfried, Wagner has allowed no duets or choruses. He has simply employed a continuous declamation, a sort of measured recitation, sustained and accompanied by a symphonic woof, woven with infinite skill

[1] *The Musical Drama, Ring of the Nibelungen*, in the *Courrier littéraire* for Oct. 10, 1876. See page 87.

from all the characteristic musical motives which attach to each person, to each idea, to each sentiment. Never before have the science of orchestration and the art of instrumental polyphony been carried so far; but over and above this wonderful orchestration, so varied, so richly colored, so powerful, rises the equally powerful declamation, of which not a syllable must be lost to the hearer, and which demands a special effort on the part of the singers.

The score of *The Rheingold* opens with the scene of the water-sprites swimming about the treasure confided to their keeping. Wagner, who stops at nothing, has dared to introduce here a pedal-note of E flat, which runs through nearly two hundred measures, and sustains the symphony and the voices of the nymphs. Eight horns are employed in this scene, to depict the monotonous undulations of the water. Above this monotone a delicious harmony gives the illusion of liquid transparency, and the softly swelling effects of sonority are like so many waves rising and falling. This charm attends each appearance of the sirens, and in the fourth part, where they rally Siegfried about the ring, we have another beautiful page, which wonderfully predicts the dramatic scenes which are to follow. As a rule, Wagner has been very happily inspired by the picturesque episodes of his vast poem. There is grandeur in Wotan's celebration of Walhalla, a heavy ruggedness in the menacing apostrophes

LISZT AND RICHARD WAGNER AT A BANQUET.

A sly dog, the abbé Liszt. Embraces Richard Wagner only that he may slide in under his silver crown, and get his share of it.

(Cham, *Charivari*, Sept. 3, 1876.)

of the giants, and a mocking vivacity in Loge's recitatives, in which the author weaves into the accompaniment, one by one, the principal motives of the preceding situations.

COSTUME OF WOTAN AS A TRAVELLER, in *Siegfried.*

The tableau of Alberich's smithy, where the thrilling sword-motive is first heard, is cleverly conceived to form a contrast to the previous scenes. The malediction of Alberich, when Wotan deprives him of the ring, is truly superb. A pretty melody of Froh, the god of joy, expressing the rejoicing over the return of Freia, then a sombre melopæa from the prophetess Erda, and a magnificent phrase from Donner, god of thunder, lead to a finale in which the march of the Gods to Walhalla receives its full development. In short, the first impression produced by the *Rhcingold* was so favorable, that some doubts were felt as to the *Walküre.* The prologue had so far exceeded all expectation that people feared a disappointment in the part on which they had first built their hopes.

REPRESENTATION OF THE "NIBELUNGEN RING," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1876.

Death of Siegmund, second act of the *Walküre*.
After a drawing by M. Knut Ekwall.

And yet, the impression produced by *The Walküre* was still more profound, in spite of the great length of the first two acts, especially the second, which contains an interminable recitative by Wotan. This opera is not so far removed from the old dramatic ideas and customs as are the other parts of the Trilogy, and consequently finds its way more rapidly into public favor. After a short, wild prelude which describes Siegmund's breathless flight, commences an act which lasts for an entire hour, but which contains so many beauties, steadily increasing in power and interest until the supreme point is reached, the superb scene between Siegmund and Sieglinda, that one would not have it shorter.

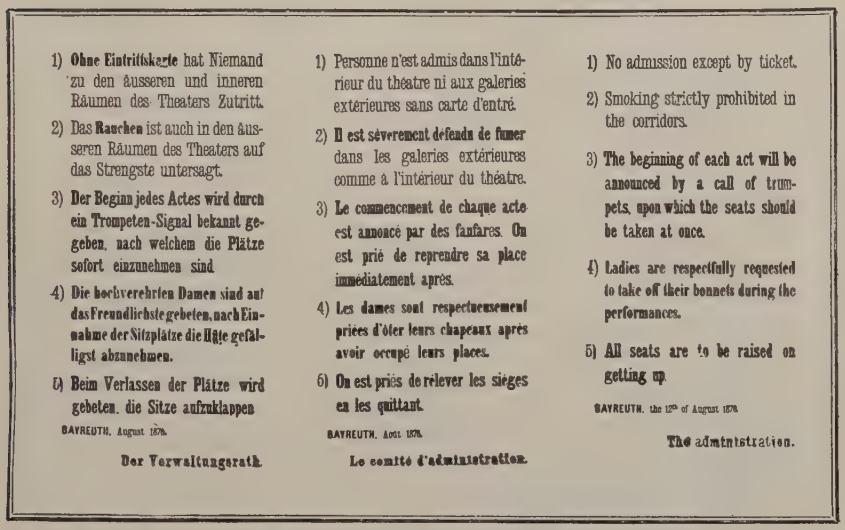
The second act is not so well filled from a dramatic point of view, and becomes a little tedious with its long conversations between Wotan, Fricka and Brunhilda. The episode of the combat between Hunding and Siegfried is treated with a masterly hand, and finishes the act infinitely better than it is begun.

The third act is a masterpiece. After the wild and sublime scene of the Walküres gathering at their rendezvous, piercing the air with their war cries, and dominating the very tempest, one anxiously follows the touching dialogue between the penitent Brunhilda and her implacable father. One is deeply impressed with the sublime and tender farewell of the father to his daughter in this fantastic scene of the sea of fire which leaps and surges round about the sleeping goddess. The entire opera is distinguished from the *Rheingold* by a bolder style, a loftier and freer inspiration.

The first act of *Siegfried* was one of the great successes of the Trilogy. It is all life and movement; the sombre monologue of Mime, the joyous entrance of Siegfried, the spirited and thrilling scene where the young hero forges his sword with an intense ardor and wild gaiety, carried

off in a general success the somewhat tiresome dialogues between Mime and Wotan in the guise of a traveller.

In the second act also, each episode which seems a trifle slow, is followed by one so delicious, so captivating, that the tiresome moments are quite forgotten. For example, after Alberich's meeting with his old enemy Wotan, comes the beautiful passage where Siegfried listens to the voices of the forest, and tries to imitate the songs of the birds, with a reed. The noisy scene where Siegfried kills the



1) **Ohne Eintrittskarte** hat Niemand zu den äusseren und inneren Räumen des Theaters Zutritt.

2) Das **Rauchen** ist auch in den äusseren Räumen des Theaters auf das Strengste untersagt.

3) **Der Beginn jedes Actes wird durch** ein Trompeten-Signal bekannt gegeben, nach welchem die Plätze sofort einzunehmen sind.

4) **Die hochverehrten Damen sind auf** das Freundlichste gebeten, nach Einnahme der Sitzplätze die Hüte gefälligst abzunehmen.

5) **Beim Verlassen der Plätze wird** gebeten, die Sitze aufzuklappen.

BAYREUTH, August 1876.

Der Verwaltungsrath.

1) Personne n'est admis dans l'intérieur du théatre ni aux galeries extérieures sans carte d'entré.

2) **Il est sévérement défendu de fumer** dans les galeries extérieures comme à l'intérieur du théatre.

3) **Le commencement de chaque acte** est annoncé par des fanfares. **On** est prié de reprendre sa place immédiatement après.

4) **Les dames sont respectueusement** priées d'ôter leurs chapeaux après avoir occupé leurs places.

5) **On est priés de relever les sièges** en les quittant.

BAYREUTH, Août 1876.

Le comité d'administration.

1) No admission except by ticket.

2) Smoking strictly prohibited in the corridors.

3) **The beginning of each act will be** announced by a call of trumpets, upon which the seats should be taken at once.

4) Ladies are respectfully requested to take off their bonnets during the performances.

5) **All seats are to be raised on** getting up.

BAYREUTH, the 12th of August 1876.

The administration.

NOTICE POSTED OUTSIDE THE BAYREUTH THEATRE.
For the representations of the Trilogy in 1876.

monster, is followed by the exquisite dialogue between Siegfried and the bird, who tells him of Mime's duplicity and warns him of his wicked designs.

In the third act, Wotan's evocation of Erda is superior to the analogous scene in the *Rheingold;* his attempt to prevent the triumph of Siegfried offers no great interest; then comes Brunhilda's awakening, and her magnificent greeting to Nature, which ends in a duet between her and

Siegfried, — a veritable duet, in which passion glows with a superhuman power and intensity. This opera contains three master qualities, all of which are developed to a supreme degree: juvenile gaiety in the first act, airy imagination in the second, and the most ardent passion in the third; it is this which shortened the slightly tedious intermediate passages, and obtained for *Siegfried* its great and unforeseen success.

The *Götterdämmerung*, on the other hand, had chilled and depressed the audience, at least up to the close of the second act. The lugubrious song of the Nornes, weaving the thread of the destiny of the Gods, Siegfried's separation from Brunhilda, his arrival at Gunther's house and the scene where he drinks the beverage of forgetfulness; then the interview between Brunhilda and her sister Waltraute, followed by the carrying off of Brunhilda by Siegfried, — all these gloomy incidents crowded into one act which lasted for very nearly two hours, — were only made endurable by the ingenious repetitions and striking combinations of themes used in the preceding operas. The second act, containing the only chorus and the only trio to be found in the Trilogy, awakened some interest and sympathy on the part of the spectators, but it was reserved for the third act to raise the enthusiasm to the level of the preceding evenings, and transform the last part of the Trilogy into an incontestable triumph.

The charming scene on the banks of the Rhine, where the nymphs beg Siegfried for the treasure; then the recollections of his past life which gradually return to him, and lead to that passionate cry: "Brunhilda, O my beloved!" his death, and the superb funeral march which follows; finally, the curse and the death of the Walküre, with the destruction of the palace of the Gods, form, in their *ensemble*, one of the most beautiful things ever written for the lyric stage,

THE ROCK OF THE WALKÜRES.

Act III. of the *Walküre*.—After an original sketch by Joseph Hoffmann.

by whatever name one may choose to qualify it, whether drama, myth, poem, or simply opera. The main point is that the whole act presents an elevation of thought, a richness of melodious inspiration, and a wonderful power of symphonic combinations, and after listening to such an act, one cannot but bow down before the artist so marvellously gifted as to create it.[1] So, notwithstanding the dull moments, it was on the whole a brilliant victory for this genius of the iron will, who had persistently followed up his project for twenty-five years, who had realized the impossible, and who gave to the world the astounding spectacle of his own apotheosis. One almost understands therefore, all things considered, the prodigious infatuation of the man and his monstrous pride; in response to the cries of an enthusiastic audience, who wish to salute the master and give a warm reception to his devoted interpreters, he comes out alone in frock coat and linen trousers, to thank the spectators and artists in a speech ending with these words, which to say the least, are far from clear: "We have shown you what we wish and what we can do when all our wills are directed towards the same object; if only you, on your side, will sustain us, then we shall have an art." At these words, which sound strange in the land of Bach and Beethoven, of Haydn and Mozart, of Weber and Schumann, the spectators are non-plussed, but they make one more attempt to call out some of the artists, especially Richter, the leader, and Mme. Materna. Again Wagner appears, alone as before, and seems anxious thus to affirm the effacement of everything which surrounds him, on this day of triumph; then, an Italian prima donna, Mme. Lucca, wild with en-

[1] The scenery of the Trilogy was painted by Brückner brothers, of Coburg, after models by Hoffman of Vienna. Prof. Döppler, of Berlin, designed the costumes; the armor came from the Meiningen factories, and the machinery was planned by Brandt, of Darmstadt, who gave special attention to the stage lighting, producing singularly beautiful and truthful effects of day and night.

REPRESENTATION OF THE "NIBELUNGEN RING," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1876.
The awakening of Brunhilda, third act of *Siegfried*.
After a drawing by M. Knut Ekwall.

thusiasm, salutes him with this strange exclamation: "Long live the master, the greatest of all masters. I am well pleased; we thank you one and all!" Then the curtain fell without a single artist having had a chance to respond to the calls of the audience.

On August 18, a banquet of honor, — sacred form — was tendered to Richard Wagner and his artists, by the so-called patrons of the work, and by those of the spectators who wished to take part in it; for, on arriving at the theatre on the previous evening, each spectator had found at his place an invitation to subscribe five marks to this repast.[1] The hero of the occasion could not restrain his impatience to speak, and as soon as an opportunity presented itself, he rose to thank the assembly for their sympathy, the performers for their disinterested collaboration, and especially the first patrons of the enterprise, who had not doubted the future of his work at a time when the press and the public were united in combatting and oppressing him.

And as the bad effect of his remarks on the previous evening had come to his ears, he proceeded to explain himself, with the most winning naïveté; he had by no means wished to imply, as some had understood, that before his advent there had been no musical art in Germany; he

[1] The text of this circular, proceeding from Wagner himself, or from the restaurant keeper, and which was not signed by a single patron, is really worth preserving. "Richard Wagner *desires* to meet, at a supper, all his patrons, protectors and friends, as well as the artists and any others who may have assembled here to witness the present representations. *In response to this desire*, we have the honor to invite you cordially to participate in a supper which will take place on Aug. 17, at quarter past seven, in the grand hall of the theatre restaurant. The price of the subscription is fixed at five marks per head (without wine, of course). It is requested that all subscriptions shall be sent in on the morning of the 17th, by nine o'clock at the latest." This is how a *spontaneous* manifestation in honor of a great man, is organized. If people had not responded to the call, it would have been easy enough to say that the restaurant keeper had originated the plan for his own aggrandizement, and thus, pass it over.

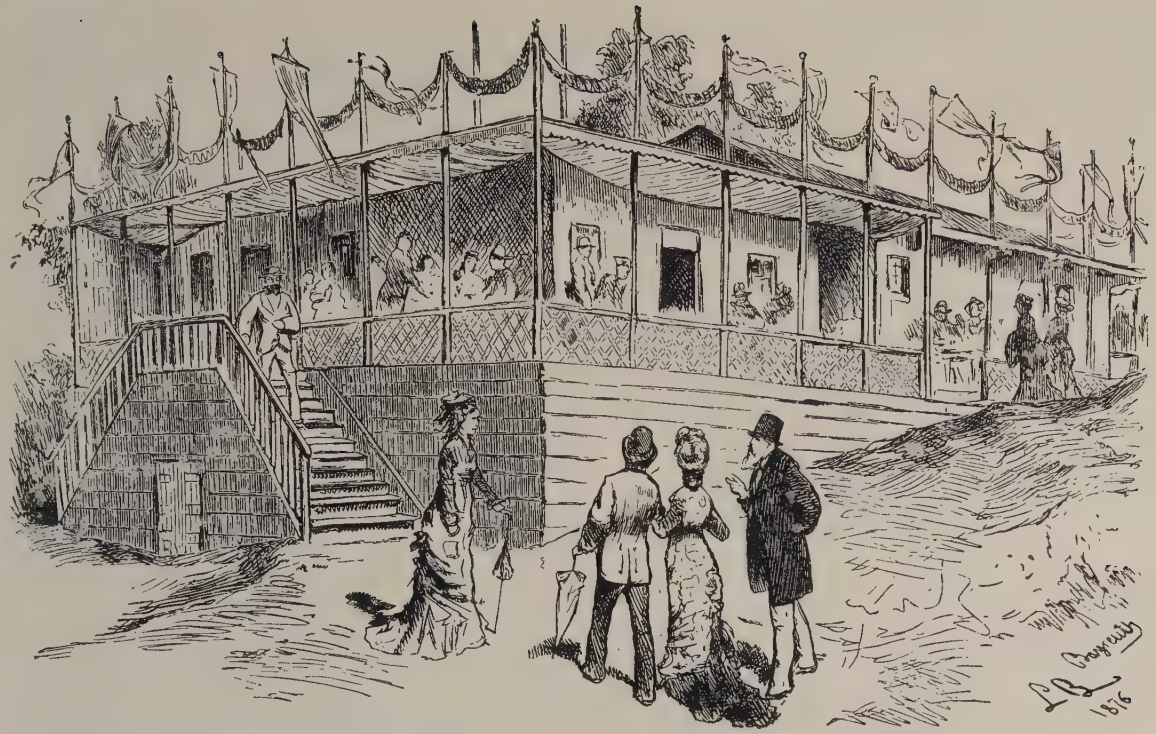
RICHARD WAGNER, IN 1877.

After a Portrait by Herkomer, etched by himself.

had simply repeated what he had said a hundred times before, — that is, that until then German opera had no physiognomy of its own, no individual character comparable to that of the French or the Italian opera. The whole world, said he in substance, knows the Italian opera and the French opera; it knows also some German operas, but not German opera. The creation of a German opera, of a theatre which characterizes the Germanic race in its highest manifestation of art, such is the work to which Richard Wagner invites all his compatriots, and to which he points when he says to them: "Would you have an art? It all depends upon yourselves. Have but the will, and you will have an art, a new art, a national theatre."[1]

After this little discourse, Wagner took a turn around the table, giving his arm to the countess of Schleinitz, who had made a very active canvass for him among the upper classes of Berlin; then, Mme. Lucca having placed upon his head a silver crown, he completed his circuit in high glee, taking off his crown to salute the company, and crowning himself afresh, radiant, happy, merry as a child. Mr. Duncker, M.P., then said a few words on the national character of this art-work. He was followed by Count Apponyi, of Buda-Pesth, who, speaking in the name of foreigners, pronounced this brief but eloquent discourse: "Like Siegfried, Wagner has gone forth fearless to the conquest of a celestial being, Tragedy. Like the German hero, he has passed without trembling through the destroying flames of envy and of hatred. Like him, he has awakened the beautiful sleeper which, for centuries, has been the inaccessible goal of the efforts of so many geniuses. Wagner also has forged a sword, has brandished a blade. *Nothung* is his divine music, in which he has welded together the fragments

[1] *Lettres de Bayreuth; The Nibelungen Ring*, by M. Ch. Tardieu (Brussels, Messrs. Schott, 1883).



ONE OF THE THEATRE RESTAURANTS AT BAYREUTH, IN 1876.

From an original sketch.

of the arts of all peoples! And we, his admirers and his friends, we may repeat to him what Brunhilda said to the hero who wakened her: 'Hail to thee, triumphant light!'"

Finally, after a few words from Ludwig Nohl, after an allocution from a Russian spectator, who addressed the company in his own language, which nobody understood, Wagner again arose to thank all the speakers, and particularly his most faithful friend and protector, the first of his patrons, the good genius who had raised his courage in the darkest hour of his despair, who had fought and conquered for him in the time of exile: Franz Liszt. Then the father-in-law and son-in-law warmly embraced each other, amid the excited cheers of five hundred sympathetic guests.

The following day a grand reception was held at Wagner's house, at which Liszt and his daughter helped to do the honors. This reception gathered about the master from sixty to eighty invited guests, proud and happy to join him in celebrating his victory. On this occasion France was represented by one lady, Mme. Judith Gautier, and several gentlemen, the most distinguished of whom was Camille Saint-Saëns. Wagner was in great spirits, and danced about like one possessed; he sung the Walhalla song at the top of his voice; he climbed on a chair in order to reach to the ear of the six-foot Russian admirer who had so warmly toasted him on the previous evening; he was even heard to extenuate the injurious effects produced by certain French criticisms, and to exclaim in an excess of open-heartedness: "Ah! great Heavens, yes! We Germans, we are dull!"

M. Saint-Saëns, being entreated to make himself heard, responded by improvising for nearly quarter of an hour on some fragments from the Trilogy, beginning with the *Götterdämmerung*, and ending with the *Rheingold;* then he played his *Danse macabre*. Up to this time people had circulated about the rooms, chatting with friends and acquaintances,

REPRESENTATION OF THE "NIBELUNGEN RING," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1876.

Funeral procession of Siegfried; third act of the *Götterdämmerung*.
After a drawing by M. Knut Ekwall.

since there was no fixed programme for the evening; but what silence and what attention fell upon the assembly as Liszt now took his turn at the piano! For a whole hour he held the people spell-bound, while he played several of his unpublished works, and some impromptu waltzes; no more music was possible after he had finished. He was the lion of the evening, and the French pianist, annoyed that

COMPOSITION OF THE PAINTER KRAUSSE.
For the façade of Wagner's house at Bayreuth.

he had seemed to wish to put himself on a line with the old master, was the first to render him homage. "He discourages all pianists," said he to a friend who was present, and without false modesty, he took his place among those who knew not the art.

The princely home which Wagner had built according to his own taste and fancy, was situated at the extremity of the town opposite the theatre, at the end of the Rennweg (Reindeer Road), which bears to-day the name of Richard

Wagner.[1] After passing the gate, a little avenue leads to a raised circular bed of flowers, crowned by a large bronze bust of the king. Facing the avenue is the house, built of reddish grey stone, nearly square, its only exterior ornament being a *sgraffito*, a sort of fresco in black and white, which formerly adorned the fronts of houses in Italy, and which may still be found in many cities of the peninsula. This allegorical composition, designed by the historical painter Robert Krausse, represents Wotan in the costume of a traveller, as in *Siegfried*, with the face and figure of the regretted tenor, Ludwig Schnorr. On one side is Mme. Schroeder-Devrient dressed as Tragedy; on the other, Mme. Cosima Wagner, impersonating Music, leads towards the altar of Tragedy the child Siegfried, which is no other than her own son Siegfried Wagner; the whole symbolizes the union of music and tragedy under the influence and for the glorification of the Germanic myth. The master has called this house Wahnfried (tranquillized illusions), and on the front may be read the following inscription in gold letters on three marble tablets:

HIER WO MEIN WAHNEN FRIEDEN FAND	WAHNFRIED	SEI DIESES HAUS VON MIR GENANNT
HERE WHERE MY ILLUSIONS FOUND REST	WAHNFRIED	THIS HOUSE BY ME IS NAMED

Through a small vestibule one enters a spacious hall paved with marble, lighted from above, and lined with busts of the king of Bavaria, of Wagner and his wife, and with marble statuettes, gifts of the king, representing the heroes of the first

[1] In the early part of his stay in Munich, while his permanent home was being built, Wagner occupied a small house on the boulevard Dammallee. It was there, in 1873, that a young French composer, carrying a letter of introduction from Liszt, was very pleasantly received by Mme. Wagner, but was able to see nothing of the master save his back, through two open doors, so absorbed was he at that time in the composition of the last scenes of the *Götterdämmerung*.

works of the master. At the top of the walls runs a frieze in relief, divided into small tableaux which retrace the principal incidents in the original poem of the *Nibelungen*. Half way up is a circular gallery upon which open the bed-rooms. To the right of this gallery, or hall, is the dining-room;

WAHNFRIED.
Home of Richard Wagner at Bayreuth.

to the left, Mme. Wagner's small reception room, decorated with the name of Liszt. Below, the grand salon terminates in a round verandah completely lined with book-cases filled with beautiful books, for Wagner was a great reader all his life; "All that is worth reading," said he, "is worth re-reading," and he enjoyed reading aloud scenes from Shakespeare, or comic pieces, with which he amused himself like a child.

This room, which also served for a reception room, contained a number of portraits. Over the door, that of Beethoven, with Goethe on his right and Schiller on his left; here the portraits of Mme. Wagner, her father and her husband, all by Lenbach; there the busts of Schroeder-Devrient and of Schnorr von Carolsfeld; finally, the portraits of the king of Bavaria and of Geyer, Wagner's step-father. After the extension of the Wagnerian Societies, the ceiling of this room was decorated with the escutcheons of the principal cities represented in the Association. Behind the house extends a modest garden, whose trees mingle with those of the royal park; here are flowers in profusion, a conservatory full of rare plants, a large aviary brilliant with peacocks, pheasants and pigeons of a rare variety. Within a small clump of trees is the massive tomb which Wagner had prepared in advance, with an enormous tombstone of beautiful gray marble veined with black; quite plain, except for a very simple moulding around the edges; no emblem, no inscription, but the whole world will always know who reposes there.[1]

The second series of the *Nibelungen* performances confirmed the impression of the first, by emphasizing the success. *Die Rheingold* and *Siegfried* were as well received as before, and the *Walküre*, better interpreted and better staged than at the first representation, was admired and appreciated even more than on that occasion. At the close of the second evening there were loud calls for the author, who refused to show himself. It was not until after the last scene of the *Götterdämmerung* that he consented to come before the

[1] "The master's life was regularity itself," says Mme. Gautier, "particularly when he was engaged on a difficult and fatiguing task. He rose at six, but after taking his bath he went back to bed and read until ten; from eleven till two were his hours for work; after dinner he took a short rest, always with a book in his hand; at quarter of six he took a drive, then worked until supper time; the evening was spent very gaily with his family, and before eleven o'clock, the whole household had retired."

curtain, and then only after repeated urging. Knowing well his weakness, everybody expected a speech, but he simply bowed, making sign that he had nothing to say, and retired as he had come. His silence on that occasion was applauded more vigorously than his discourse had ever been. Had he really nothing to say, or was it that he doubted for once his powers of oratory, after having been so badly understood a few days before?

It was not the same at the end of the third series. As soon as the curtain fell he advanced before it, and said: "The *Bühnenfestspiele* have had their term. Will they return? Heaven alone knows." Then he went on to say that he had outlined this work, with faith in the German genius; that he finished it for the glory of his august benefactor, King Ludwig, who was then present. He praised in the most exalted terms the part which the king had taken in the realization of the enterprise, he thanked him for his many favors; then, reverting to the misunderstanding of his remarks at the close of the first execution, he hoped, said he, that he should not again be accused of pride if he should say that with the work just achieved, a great step had been accomplished for the independence of the national art. Whether or not this step had been a happy one, the future alone would decide; but although these executions had been only experiments, they would probably not be without profit for the national art. Finally, he addressed some very warm compliments to his collaborators. . . . At this moment the curtain opened behind him, and all the artists appeared, grouped about the leader of the orchestra, Hans Richter. Then one last word of farewell from Wagner to the audience, and the curtain closed again; the representations of the Trilogy were over. Wagner had commemorative medals of silver, bronze and copper struck off, to preserve forever the glorious remembrance of these days. One only, of gold,

and larger than the rest, was presented to King Ludwig; certainly, the only case on record of a subject decorating his sovereign. It was indeed a noble triumph, so far as the grandeur of the enterprise was concerned, and yet Wagner was not satisfied. He who had said, in 1851, that *one single execution* of his four-part myth would suffice him, and that a second execution seemed to him quite superfluous, was

MEDAL COMMEMORATIVE OF THE BAYREUTH FESTIVALS.

Engraved by M. Ch. Wiener, of Brussels.

Face: Portrait of Richard Wagner.
Reverse: (from an original sketch by Prof. Adolph Schmitz, of Dusseldorf): representation of the principal characters in Wagner's works. On the right, the Hollander, Lohengrin, Tannhäuser, Hans Sachs and Tristan; on the left, Brunhilda, Wotan, Siegfried and the Rhinedaughters.

still unappeased after the second, and even the third execution. He held a grudge against the princes who had come to Bayreuth, for their apparent indifference, and their parsimony in regard to the Trilogy; he wanted them to become devotees, and to have the work played throughout the land.

Is not this the significance of a certain passage from *The Work and the Mission of my Life*? "It became quite evident that my efforts had not been understood to tend

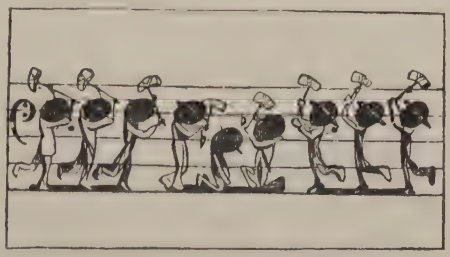
towards the general welfare, but to have a mere personal import. Even in the presence of this happy result, there was no representative of governmental authority ready to take definite action in the matter, in order to bring about a realization of what had just been demonstrated possible for the amelioration of the national art. Thus, even at the time which I judged opportune for pushing vigorously towards the institution which I aimed to establish, by means of model performances at regular intervals, all the burden of the enterprise fell back upon myself; I was left alone to pursue and to achieve it, as a fantastic individual, hardly worth considering."

And this was not all; for even when the Trilogy was performed outside of Bayreuth, it was seldom enough performed in its entirety, and the integral representations given at Munich, Vienna, Leipsic, Hamburg, etc., were far enough from conforming to the author's theories, and to the example set at Bayreuth. On the contrary he was chagrined to find that his work was divided into distinct pieces which were played like any other opera, "like repertoire pieces," to employ his own expression.

This disappointment, however, like most others, had its happy side. It was found that the public evinced a satisfaction in these fragments, without having the least idea of the general conception, and that the work was everywhere received with applause, notwithstanding the unfavorable circumstances under which it was produced, and the cuts which disfigured it. He hoped that in view of this success of the fragments, the time would come when the entire work would be performed in all Germany on certain fête days. But he died before seeing this hope fulfilled; for the performances of the Trilogy given at Berlin during his life-time, by a troupe recruited for the purpose and in a second-rate theatre, were but an isolated case, and

had no effect upon the habitual course of musical life in Berlin.

This hope was all the more ambitious, since certain writers, while admiring the work in itself, and the master's extraordinary power of conception, very earnestly combatted his pretension to determine by the Trilogy the ideal and definite form of the German national art. In their eyes, Wagner, with his learned restorations and his imitations of the Greek theatre, was really less national, less a natural product of the German soil than Weber, who has so faithfully interpreted the sentiment, the reveries, the harmonies of the forest, the naively fantastic, with which his mind was imbued Why then, said these critics, attribute this national character almost exclusively and *par excellence* to Wagner's works, when they proceed so evidently from the Greek theatre, and when this origin and this resemblance are claimed as titles of glory by those who have given the best explanation of the master's theories? Now, could there be two civilizations, two soils, two climates more dissimilar than those of Greece and Germany? And Wagner, in seeking to take upon himself the authorship of so glorious a filiation, had furnished weapons to those who, while confessing his prodigious genius, denied that the national art was incarnate in the Trilogy, and that Germany had found what Italy and France possessed, — a lyric drama having an organism evolved from the race itself and from its soil.



THE ANIMATED FORGE MOVEMENT.
From the *Schultze and Muller Ring of the Nibelungen*, 1883.

These criticisms, which are very clearly summed up in an important literary article by M. Gustave Frédérix, certainly

bear witness to the mental culture of their authors, but farther than that have not much real weight or influence. Indeed, they bear less upon the work itself than upon the material conditions under which Wagner had brought it before the public, with the idea, as these critics seem to think, of stamping it with an authentic national character. But this was not his idea. By all that is purely decorative, by his theatre and its architectural characteristics, he has allied himself, as he claimed to do, with the religious and dramatic festivals of antique Greece. But it is only the outer garment which he has borrowed; the soul of the work, the subject upon which he has fixed his choice is absolutely Germanic in its essence, as the music with which he has enriched it springs from the purest German sources. These facts cannot fail to be recognized by anyone who will take the trouble to study the poem and the score; but the work must be stripped of its ornament in order to judge it properly, and to discern how deeply it strikes its roots into German soil.

A commemorative medal was not deemed sufficient to preserve and transmit to future ages and generations an adequate souvenir of an event so extraordinary and unprecedented as these Bayreuth festivals; it was agreed to perpetuate their memory by a monument of marble and stone, capable of resisting the assaults of time. Originally, the Bayreuth theatre had a rounded façade, with an open corridor which served as a covered walk where people could stay during the *entr'actes*, in case of rain, and breathe the fresh air outside. Between the Trilogy performances and those of *Parsifal*, an extension was added to the front of the building, which closed this corridor except at the two extremities, and in the section thus sheltered from the weather by this new construction, was erected, in a frame of stone, a slab of of black marble, on which were engraved in gold letters the

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN.
ERSTE AUFFÜHRUNG IM JAHRE 1876.
VORABEND : DAS RHEINGOLD.
Wotan : Franz Betz. — Donner : Eugen Gura. — Froh : George Unger. — Loge : Heinrich Vogel. — Alberich : Karl Hill. — Mime : Karl Schlosser. — Fasolt : Albert Eilers. — Fafner : Franz von Reichenberg — Fricka : Friederike Grün. — Freia : Marie Haupt. — Erda : Louise Jaide. — Woglinde : Lilli Lehmann. — Wellgunde : Marie Lehmann. — Flosshilde : Minna Lammert.
ERSTER TAG : DIE WALKÜRE.
Siegmund : Albert Niemann. — Hunding : Joseph Niering. — Wotan : Franz Betz. — Sieglinde : Josephine Scheffky. — Brünnhilde : Amalie Materna. — Fricka : Friederike Grün. — Gerhilde : Marie Haupt. — Helmwige : Lilli Lehmann. — Ortlinde : Marie Lehmann. — Waltraute : Louise Jaide. — Siegrune : Antonie Amann. — Rossweisse : Minna Lammert. — Grimmgerde : Hedwig Reicher. — Schwertleite : Johanna Wagner.
ZWEITER TAG : SIEGFRIED.
Siegfried : Georg Unger. — Mime : Karl Schlosser. — Der Wanderer : Franz Betz. — Alberich : Karl Hill. — Fafner : Franz von Reichenberg. — Erda : Louise Jaide. — Brünnhilde : Amalie Materna.
DRITTER TAG : GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG.
Siegfried : Georg Unger. - Gunther : Eugen Gura. - Hagen : Gustav Siehr. - Alberich : Karl Hill. — Brünnhilde : Amalie Materna. — Gutrune : Mathilde Weckerlin. — Waltraute : Louise Jaide. — Die drei Nornen : Johanna Wagner. Josephine Scheffky. Friederike Grün. — Die drei Rheintöchter : Lilli und Marie Lehmann. Minna Lammert. — Führer der Mannen : Herrlich, Bürger, Weiss, Koch, Eilers, Reichenberg, Niering.
Orchesterleitung : Hans Richter. — Scenische Leitung : Karl Brandt. — Decorationen : Joseph Hofmann. Gebrüder Brückner. — Costüme : Emil Döpler. — Choreographie : Richard Fricke.
Gewidmet von den Baumeistern :
Carl Wölfel, Conrad Weiss, Chr. Vogel u. P. Schäferlein.

STONE COMMEMORATIVE OF THE PERFORMANCES OF THE TRILOGY. IN 1876.

names of all the artists who had taken part in *The Ring of the Nibelungen* in 1876. This was an homage rendered to the master and his interpreters by the architects, whose names are modestly inscribed in black letters at the foot of the monument. This commemorative tablet, like the tombstone at Wahnfried, bears no name of the author. Yet how surely will posterity in the ages to come, seeking to decipher a title almost effaced by time, and names of singers long since forgotten, remember always what man of genius has created this masterpiece, what giant in yonder tomb is sleeping his last sleep!

RICHARD WAGNER, BY GUST. GAUL.
Caricature made at the rehearsal of the Musical Society at Vienna, February 27, 1875.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCERTS AT LONDON — THE TRILOGY AT BERLIN — PARSIFAL AT BAYREUTH.

THE representation of the Trilogy at Bayreuth produced an almost immediate echo at Paris. M. Pasdeloup, on the alert for all the interesting novelties for his Popular Concerts, felt that he must give one of the most beautiful fragments from the work which had just thrilled the music lovers all over Europe, and accordingly he inscribed the funeral march of Siegfried, from the *Götterdämmerung*, on his program for the 29th of October, 1876; this number immediately preceded the overture to *Der Freischütz*, which was the last piece on the program. But a cabal had been organized, under cover of that mighty word "patriotism," and at the very first note of the march, this small but determined portion of the audience started in to make a disturbance. However, the greater part of those present having protested against this interference with their rights, and insisted upon hearing the piece which had been announced, the Siegfried funeral march was executed without further interruption; at the end the bravos were much more numerous than the hisses, and some short-sighted enthusiasts even clamored for an encore.

But M. Pasdeloup, a prudent man, had made up his mind not to repeat the march, and was in such haste to show this determination to his audience that he immediately struck up the overture to *Freischütz*. The fury of the "patriots"

could be restrained no longer, and they began their hoots and hisses again with redoubled energy. Four times M. Pasdeloup started *Der Freischütz*, four times he was obliged to stop; the excited opponents, not giving themselves a chance to recognize the characteristic beginning of a masterpiece often applauded by them, kept on hissing Weber for Wagner. M. Pasdeloup then tried to speak; it was in vain. At last he decided to make a fifth attempt at the overture; all of the *andante* was drowned in vociferations, and it was not until the *allegro* rose above the storm of hisses, that the crowd perceived with surprise and confusion this well-known motive, and hastened to make up for its blunder by tumultuous applause. Never, since the glorious days of *Tannhäuser*, had a Paris audience given more striking proof of its ignorance and its versatility.

Then, of course the newspapers had to take up the cudgels and continue the fight among themselves, with as little knowledge of the question raised by the work as of the work itself. They charged M. Pasdeloup with lack of patriotism, urging that until the objectionable piece under discussion, not a single note of Wagner had been heard at the Popular Concerts since 1870. This was a manifest error, for his principal compositions had recurred regularly on M. Pasdeloup's programs during the two preceding years, and had caused no disturbance; nothing more than the conscientious hisses of the desperate opponents who considered it a sacred duty to hiss everything connected with Wagner.

One must know that the most furious of these writers were those already committed by former articles apropos of *Tannhäuser*, and who, being unable to pardon Wagner for having disproved their verdict, were quite upset at seeing their decision totally disregarded by the musical world, and were beginning to despair of setting up their opinions, even in France. In this juncture what was left them but to pro-

scribe the man in place of the musician, by reason not of his works, but of his nationality? The fact is patent; the disturbance organized on Oct. 29 was not for the purpose of preventing Wagner's reappearance on the programs of the popular concerts, since he had been generously represented there for at least two years; it was simply another attempt to crush the musician without hearing him, as had formerly been done at the *Tannhäuser* representations, and

THE BAYREUTH THEATRE WITH THE RECTANGULAR ADDITION BUILT IN THE SPRING OF 1882.

because his ancient detractors were enraged at seeing him recover lost ground so quickly in spite of their systematic attacks.[1]

He recovered it so well that this noisy fray did him no

[1] I may be permitted to quote here the letter which M. Pasdeloup addressed to me on this occasion: "Thanks for assisting me in my work. Your vigorous article in the *Français* (Nov. 6) gives me hope that we shall be able to surmount the obstacle. If we should remain strangers to the movement imparted to music by Wagner, in thirty years our young composers might well be little old men. Once more I thank you."

harm, and, moreover, it was the last violent incident of the campaign which for more than twenty years had been pursued in France against the author of *Tannhäuser*. There had been such senseless prejudice at the bottom of this outburst, that all the auditors of calm, unbiased judgment had protested; and it must be confessed that they did well to give such religious attention to that march which is so difficult to understand for those who have not heard the Trilogy. To-day, it it is generally admired, because it recalls to people's minds the story of the hero who has just died, and because the motives composing it have become familiar through hearing them in the principal situations where Siegfried has appeared throughout the Trilogy. But in 1876 it was quite new to French auditors, and when one stops to reflect, it is a matter of great surprise that a public so inclined to rail at whatever it does not immediately comprehend, should have chosen under the circumstances to listen seriously to a serious work, under

WAGNER, CALLED THE MUSICIAN OF THE FUTURE.
By H. MEYER
(*Le Sifflet*, Aug. 27, 1876.)

REPRESENTATION OF "PARSIFAL," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1882.

Arrival of Parsifal at the domain of the Grail. **(Act I., Scene I.)**

fire of jeers and hisses. Truly, this was a great success for Richard Wagner.[1]

While France was still quarrelling about him and his work, Wagner took a trip into Italy to recuperate from the fatigues of Bayreuth. Here he received a welcome which touched him deeply, for he never would have believed, in the beginning of his career, to have one day encountered such sympathy in the land of Donizetti and of Verdi. After a stay of several weeks in Sorrento, he visited Rome, where the German ambassador, baron von Keudell, gave a grand soirée in his honor, and where the Saint Cecilia Academy awarded to him the highest honorary degree, that of *Socius illustris*. On December 5th he attended at Bologna a performance of *Rienzi* which obtained for him a magnificent ovation.

But when he got back to Bayreuth, after the excitement was over, and the smoke of triumph dissipated, and sat down to figure out the exact material status of his theatre and his enterprise, he found himself face to face with some very discouraging facts. Certainly, the performances of the Trilogy at Bayreuth had been glorious for the master, but they had left him with a deficit of about thirty thousand dollars. Therefore, on January 1st, 1877, he launched from Bayreuth a pressing appeal to the Wagner societies; a thousand tickets for the three series of annual performances were issued at a reduced price of one hundred marks; furthermore he counselled his adherents to ask from Parliament a subsidy

[1] Certain of the newspapers made sport of the title *Götterdämmerung*; others derived much amusement from the general subject of the *Nibelungen*. But these geniuses were fifty years behind the times, for the legend had been known and studied even in France, in some very important literary works, long before Wagner made use of it. It was not wise to display an ignorance of it, even in jest, for that was to imply an ignorance of Heine, and the admirable pages in which he gives a resumé of the whole poem of the *Nibelungen*. When one undertakes to create a laugh, he should make sure that it will not be at his own expense; a *bon plaisant* is decidedly a rare thing, as La Bruyère has long since remarked.

PRAYER OF RIENZI.

of one hundred thousand marks, to aid the progress of the new German national art; but he was soon obliged to renounce this idea before the absolute certainty of failure. "After my former experience, all expectation of receiving effective aid from the government was abandoned."

The most curious passage in this circular is the one in which Wagner recommends the Societies, in order to avoid the hostile criticisms which had appeared after the *Nibelungen*, and to hear no discordant voice in the midst of the general concert of praise, to allow no one to come to Bayreuth who is not sufficiently initiated and reasonably well-disposed. This, said he, was what he regretted not exacting for the Trilogy, and that not for his own sake, ah! great goodness no! but out of regard for the artists and the auditors; he did not wish again "to place his true partisans beside people whose only aim was to disturb the performance and combat his work." And this project was carried out, at least for the first two performances of *Parsifal.*

In order to make up this deficit of thirty thousand dollars, which weighed heavily upon him, Wagner first arranged with an impresario to take possession of the stage effects, no longer needed at Bayreuth, and to hawk the Trilogy about from town to town — a most complete negation of his pet idea; — then he undertook an excursion himself, which came near involving him in inextricable difficulties.

Following the advice of the great violinist Wilhelmj, one of his most devoted followers, he accepted an invitation to go to London and give some concerts, which he was to direct alternately with Hans Richter. The good news was soon announced to the English people by a letter inserted in the *Times*, which started an active propaganda in the master's favor; "Often, in years past," wrote Wagner to Wilhelmj, March 15, 1877, "I have received invitations from England to undertake similar enterprises. You know that

it has not been my choice to give concerts, properly called. My idea has been to invite to Bayreuth those who desired to know me. It would seem that in this way, and especially in England, I have made some good friends. You, my dear friend, you have given me such a pressing invitation to come and persuade these people, that I have decided to do so." The fact is that Wagner could not have put himself in a position more flatly contradictory to himself, than by undertaking to conduct, not the *ensemble* of the Trilogy, not even one or two entire parts of it, but some selections, according to the English style, — some pieces or fragments cut from his different works, from *Rienzi* to and including the *Nibelungen*.

RICHARD WAGNER.
(*The Hornet*, of London, May 9, 1877.)

The organizing of these concerts was not an easy matter, and it required all the energy of the conductor, Edward Dannreuther and the personal influence of Wilhelmj, who took the post of first violin, to surmount the accumulation of obstacles. In the first place, this was the time when the season opened at London, and all the good artists had been monopolized by Messrs. Mapleson and Gye, at Drury Lane and at Covent Garden, to say nothing of the regular Philharmonic and Crystal Palace orchestras. Therefore it was necessary to import instrumentalists from Germany, Holland, Belgium, etc., and it was no small matter to train this

RICHARD WAGNER, IN 1877.
From a photograph taken at London

cosmopolitan orchestra of a hundred and sixty-eight musicians. Little by little, however, after much floundering about, order and discipline were established, and the orchestra had very nearly gained its equilibrium when Wagner and Richter arrived, on April 30, for the last rehearsals.

Six concerts, some in the evening, some in the afternoon, were to be given from May 7th to 19th inclusive, in the immense Albert Hall, which holds from ten to twelve thousand people. Most of these concerts drew very large houses, but not quite large enough to make the enterprise a profitable one, so much had been spent in advertising and securing the best singers.[1] Then the managers, Hodge and Essex, decided to give two supplementary concerts at reduced prices, making up the programs from selections most likely to please the general public, and at the same time cutting down the expenses as much as possible. This idea brought good results, but the deficit could not yet be made up. Even the expenses of the concerts were not entirely covered, and Wagner had to give up a portion of the sum coming to him, as stipulated for in advance, in order that all the artists might be paid. Nevertheless, he was still able to send to Bayreuth more than seven hundred pounds sterling; not a very heavy result to follow so great an effort.

Immediately his admirers in London started a subscription, unknown to him, for the purpose of liquidating completely the Bayreuth debt. A considerable sum had already been

[1] These concerts cost, at the lowest figure, sixty thousand pounds sterling, and the managers lost at least five thousand pounds. Each violin, and there were forty-eight of them, received ten guineas for the six concerts; the two supplementary concerts paid them two guineas more, including rehearsals. The rest of the orchestra was paid in proportion; there were six flutes, seven hautboys, eight clarinets, eight horns, seven bassoons, five trumpets, five trombones, five tubas, two pairs of kettle-drums, a big drum and cymbals, a tambourine and castanets, seven harps, fifteen alto-violins, twenty violoncellos, and twenty-two bass-viols,—a monster orchestra!

collected to this end, when it was learned that he had found other means of extricating himself from the difficulty, and that all the receipts from the performances of the Trilogy at Munich would be applied towards wiping out this liability. So the English subscribers were given the sweet surprise of getting their money back, besides receiving from the master a warm letter of thanks to his friends in England. In short, at London, as at Bayreuth, it was, financially, a sad piece of business, but musically, a grand success.

One fact worth mentioning is that the English people, who went to Albert Hall principally to behold Richard Wagner in the flesh, exhibited from the very first concert a decided preference for Hans Richter as an orchestra leader. After such hurried and flurried rehearsals, it was feared lest there should be some rough places, as indeed there were, in the first concert; and Wagner, nervous as usual, lacked the *sangfroid* to set matters straight. Therefore, when Richter took his turn with the baton, cool-headed, marvellously sure, and full of reserve force, he made a very favorable impression, which increased with every concert.

Wagner was nevertheless, or rather had been, an exceptional conductor. For Weber's and Beethoven's works especially, he had no rival, such an instinctive appreciation of their true style did his profound admiration for these masters give him; besides a perfect perception of the beauty of sound, shades of movement and precision of rhythm, he had the gift of communicating his enthusiasm to his performers; but in London he did not do himself justice. He lacked strength, which was not surprising at his age, and, being worn out by the rehearsals, the evening found him with a feeble, unsteady arm. He also showed some slips of memory; in short, he who conducted the *Kaisermarsch* at this first concert was but the shadow of the Wagner of former days; it was enough for the musicians, but not for the audience.

The singers whom the master had brought together were some of the interpreters of Bayreuth, — Mme. Materna, Mme. Sadler-Grün, Unger, Hill, Chandon, Schlosser, etc., and all made a marked success. At the close of the first concert Wagner was recalled three times, and the princes and princesses of the royal family demanded that fragments from *Tannhäuser* should be repeated at the third concert, which they desired to attend. But fate did not decree this festival season to be without a flaw; on the fourth evening, the *Lohengrin* duet was so badly mixed up by Unger, who was suffering from an indisposition, that they had to stop in the middle of it, and suppress all the other pieces on the program in which this singer was to appear. At the following concerts hearty applause greeted the ride of the Walküres, the Siegfried funeral march, the selections from the *Meistersinger*, and above all those from *Tannhäuser*, after which the author and his two lieutenants, Richter and Wilhelmj, were called to the royal box and complimented. At the two supplementary concerts they were able to give the selections from *Siegfried*, which Unger's indisposition had rendered impossible before; finally, after the last concert, Wagner was called to the front, where he earnestly thanked the orchestra, adding that he hoped "to be associated with the artists of London more than once in the future."

This hope was perhaps a bit rash on the part of a man who had just celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday; on this occasion the German choral association had given him a grand banquet, and of course he could not let so fine an opportunity to speak escape him. "I have not had many happy hours in my life," said he, "but of the few which have been granted me, those which I have spent in London in your midst will remain in my memory among the most enjoyable and beneficial. All of you, who have given your co-operation to my works, I thank you from the bottom of my heart." A

few days earlier, May 17th, he had met some of his friends at his home in Orme Square, where he lodged with Mr. and Mrs. Dannreuther, and had given them the first reading of his entire poem of *Parsifal*, which he had brought with him, and which was to appear in book form at the end of the same year. Finally, he left London on the 4th of June, not without announcing once more that he should preserve the tenderest recollections of his English friends.

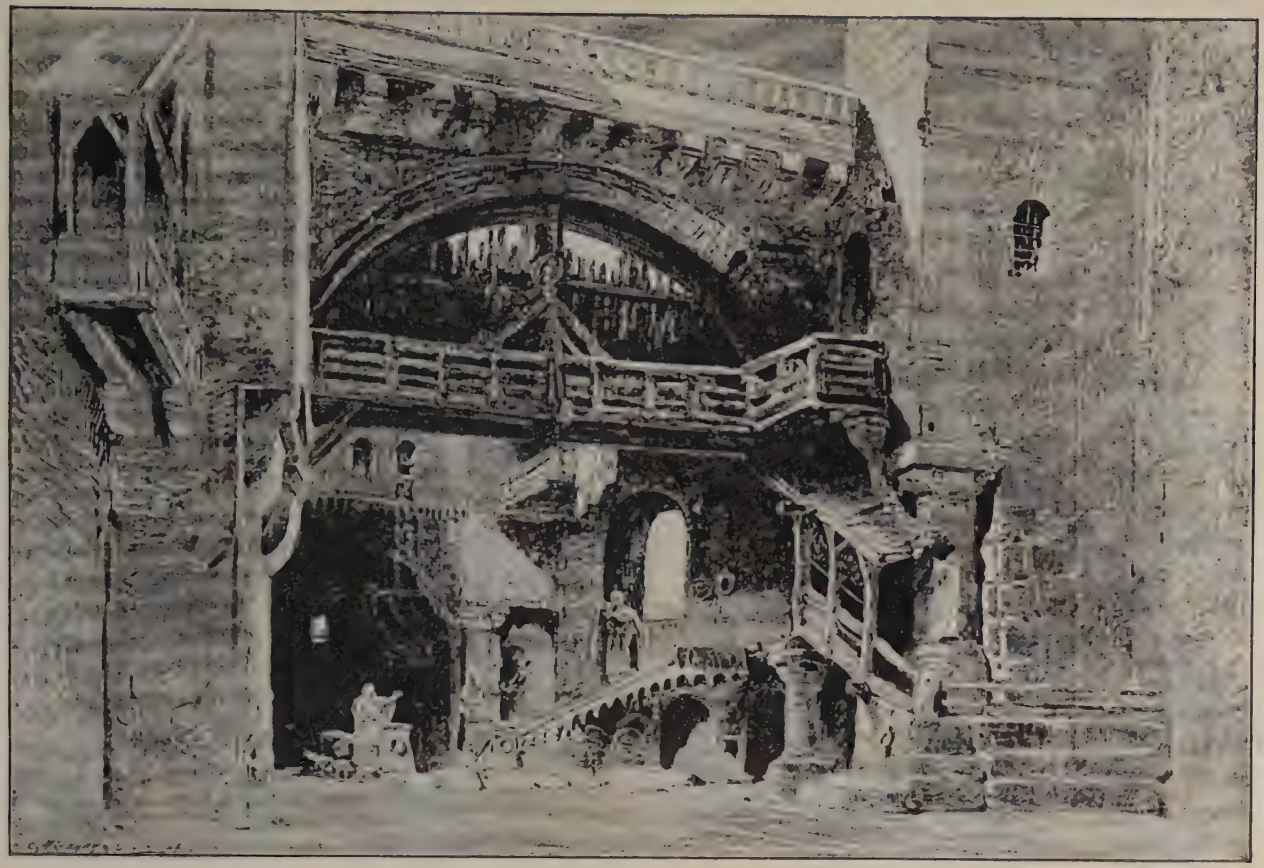
Once back in Bayreuth, Wagner occupied himself first of all with founding in that city a Conservatory where musicians would be admitted who had already received a complete education in one of the existing musical schools; they should pass six years in this new Conservatory, and become imbued, performers as well as singers, with the spirit of the master's works, in order to give at length as perfect an execution as possible of the products of German national art as exemplified by Richard Wagner. He reckoned that ten thousand marks ought to be enough to organize the course for the first year, after which the receipts from the concerts would take care of the other five years. This project he laid before the delegates of the Wagner Societies; but they, already very uneasy about the large deficit from the Bayreuth performances and the financial failure of the London concerts, turned a deaf ear to it, and the ideal Conservatory had still less of a success at Bayreuth than it had attained at Dresden and at Munich.

However, this reunion of the Wagner committees in the autumn of 1877 at least resulted in assuring the future representations of *Parsifal:* the different societies already formed were merged into one general Association having its center at Bayreuth, and whose members paid in an annual contribution of fifteen marks, with the privilege of giving more if they wished. At last, in order to encourage the public, Wagner made *Parsifal* the immediate and specific object

towards which the subscriptions would apply, and this simple announcement had such a happy effect that during that year more than two hundred new members were recruited in Germany and elsewhere. Yet the number of patrons did not exceed seventeen hundred, and as the sum of one hundred and eighty thousand marks, representing assessments as well as voluntary gifts, did not suffice for the establishment of a "School of style," and also for the representation of *Parsifal*, Wagner announced that he would give up the former. At the same time he decided to open the Theatre at Bayreuth to everybody who wished to come, and to give fourteen performances of *Parsifal* (after the first two, reserved for the patrons) at the price of thirty marks each. This idea, entirely contrary to his former project of making the Bayreuth performances more and more exclusive, was an excellent one, and was to bear good results.

RICHARD WAGNER.
(*The Musical World*, London, May 26, 1877.)

In May, 1881, the Trilogy, which had already been played in its entirety at different towns, notably at Hamburg and Leipsic, was given for the first time in Berlin; but it was not at the royal theatre. A report had been circulated the preceding year, that the *Nibelungen Ring* was going to be played at the Berlin Opera; but this news was scarcely credited by those who understood the sentiments which Richard Wagner and Mr. Hülsen, general



REPRESENTATION OF "PARSIFAL," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1882.
Evocation of Kundry by Klingsor. (Act II., Scene I.)

intendant of the royal theatres, entertained for each other. The one found all the resources which could be offered him insufficient, and the other estimated the difficulties of execution insurmountable; the intendant, particularly, did not wish to bind himself down to give the four parts of the Trilogy as a single work, nor to present them in their natural order.

However, the director of the Leipsic theatre, Newmann, wishing very much to have the Trilogy heard in Berlin, offered to co-operate with the royal intendant, whose task in this case would have been much simplified, and who seemed about to consent, — he consulted the Emperor, who remembered enough of Bayreuth to prevent him from interesting himself in the question, — but they could not agree on a leader for the orchestra. Then Newmann fell back upon his first idea of representing the Trilogy at an independent theatre, with a leader whom Wagner liked, and who was imbued with the master's ideas, — Anton Seidl. He rented the Victoria theatre, got together a company of the best artists in Leipsic, re-enforced the symphony orchestra of Berlin with members of the Leipsic orchestra, and was able at last to mount the *Nibelungen Ring* under very favorable conditions, although without imitating all the Bayreuth innovations.

The *Rheingold* exceeded all expectations, and the *Walküre* also, in spite of its length, had a considerable success; but *Siegfried* did not go off so well as at Bayreuth, perhaps owing to the insufficiency of the tenor charged with the principal rôle; finally, the *Götterdämmerung* made up for this bad effect, and the last act was received with wild enthusiasm. Wagner, who was called before the curtain, expressed his warm appreciation of the leader, of the director, and of Mme. Materna, who worthily represented the artists. She had indeed outstripped herself in the role of Brunhilda, but at her side were at least three incomparable artists, — Scaria in Wotan, Vogl in Loge, Sieban in Mime; and, among the

others, very many were preferable to their predecessors at Bayreuth.

These performances at Berlin, nearly perfect from every point of view, and which met with such unquestioned success, must have been all the more gratifying to Wagner, since they were given before an ordinary audience with no prejudice

MME. MATERNA AS KUNDRY,
second act of *Parsifal.*

either for or against the work, and which confirmed without restriction the success at Bayreuth.

Meanwhile Wagner worked away at *Parsifal.* This poem he had taken from the legend of the Grail, sung by the German and French troubadours, notably by Christian of Troy and by Wolfram of Eschenbach, who have celebrated this

reunion of knights vowed to the worship of Christ, giving up the pleasures of the world in order to consecrate themselves to the keeping of the Grail — that is to say, of the cup from which Jesus drank at the last supper, and which afterwards received the blood of the Crucifixion — and of the spear with which Longinus, the Roman soldier, pierced the Saviour's side.

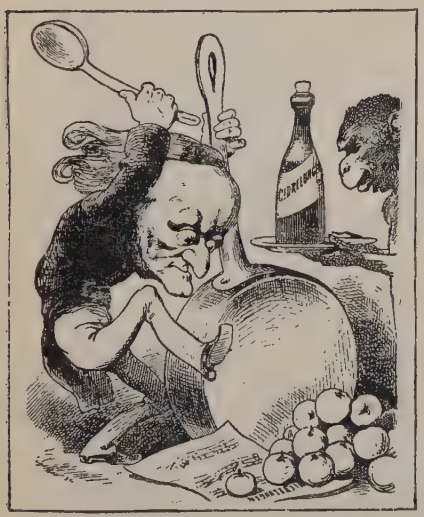
For a long time since, Wagner had marked a certain leaning towards mysticism, towards a Christianity rich in miracles, and he yielded to this grand and religious inspiration when he wrote his *Parsifal*, no longer in his eyes a lyric drama, but a *solemn work destined to hallow the stage* (*ein Bühnenweihfestspiel*); therefore it is not without reason that a German critic has given the following judgment of it: "*Parsifal* is the Song of songs of divine love, as *Tristan* is the Song of songs of terrestrial love."

The master had written the poem at Bayreuth during 1876 and 1877, developing the old sketch made at Zurich; as to the music, he commenced that in his sixty-fifth year. The first act was composed in the spring of 1878, and the second, already well advanced by the middle of June, was finished on the eleventh of October; after Christmas he started the third, which occupied him until the month of April, 1879; but before the end of that year an attack of his old enemy, erysipelas, forced him to seek refuge in the south of Italy. He did not give up work, however, and he put the finishing touch to this long labor on January 13, 1882, at Palermo.

The recitative which forms the *dénouement* of *Lohengrin* might serve as a preface to *Parsifal*, since Lohengrin is the son of Parsifal, king of the Grail, and after disclosing his mysterious origin, to satisfy Elsa's curiosity, he is obliged to return to Monsalvat and his brother knights. These knights were chosen by the Holy Grail itself, which caused

their names to appear upon a cup, and this it was which sustained them by a miraculous nourishment. A dove descended from Heaven on Holy Friday of each year, and deposited a white wafer in the sacred vase, the sight of which sufficed to preserve these knights from death. But how did Parsifal become the king of the Grail?

At the moment the drama opens, Titurel, founder and chief of the order of the Grail, feeling that he has not long to live, has already yielded up the throne to his son Amfortas; but the latter is not worthy to reign, for he has succumbed to temptation. Opposite the Christian citadel is that of the pagans, raised by the magician Klingsor, whose unworthiness has caused his expulsion from the order of the Grail, and who seeks to avenge this injury; he has transformed the desert into a region of delights, peopled with enchantresses which are at the same time maidens and flowers; and which have already succeeded in drawing more than one knight within their snares. Amfortas, arming himself with a precious relic, — the spear with which the Saviour's side was pierced, — sallies forth to conquer Klingsor, but having yielded to the fatal charm he is powerless. Klingsor seizes the sacred weapon and strikes the king with it, leaving him with a wound which never heals.



THE WAGNER TRILOGY, by GILL.
(*Eclipse*, Sept. 3, 1876.)

The knights await a liberator, pure in heart and in body; and meanwhile no ointment will relieve the cruel wound of

Amfortas, not even the balm brought from Arabia by a strange and mysterious woman, wild-looking and wretchedly clothed, who devotes herself to the service of the keepers of the Grail, but who at times comes under the power of the magician Klingsor, being transformed by him into a creature divinely beautiful, the most formidable of all the temptations

PARSIFAL (M. JOEGER) AND THE FLOWER-MAIDENS,
from the second act of *Parsifal.*

which have ever assailed the knights of the Grail. Such is the double destiny of Kundry, who will not be delivered until some pure soul shall have resisted her charms. Only then shall she find repose, the repose which she has sought in vain for

REPRESENTATION OF "PARSIFAL," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1882.

Parsifal baptises Kundry. (Act III., Scene I.)

centuries; for since the day when the unhappy woman laughed at seeing the Saviour in the streets of Jerusalem, sinking under the weight of the cross, she has been doomed to wander over the earth, laughing always with a mirthless laugh, unable to weep, unable to die.

The liberator so anxiously awaited will be Parsifal, who enters upon the scene just as the knight Gurnemanz has finished relating to some pages these necessary preliminaries. Parsifal has killed one of the sacred swans, and Gurnemanz reproaches him for this act of sacrilege committed in the domain of the Grail; the lad, touched to repentance, breaks his bow and quiver, and the good knight, struck by this ingenuous behavior, believes that he recognizes in him the pure and innocent being (reinige Thor) who will have power to save the Grail. He leads him to Monsalvat castle, where Parsifal, silent and attentive, witnesses the ceremony of the consecration of the Grail and of the communion of the knights.

Sweet and solemn chants issue from the arches of the temple. Children appear bearing the Grail, enclosed within a rich casket. After them is carried Amfortas upon his bed of sorrow; but the unhappy king does not hold himself worthy to raise towards heaven the sacred cup; it is not until he is reminded that his father Titurel ordained him to fulfill this office, that he decides to do it.

Then from the height of the cupola an invisible choir chants the words of Christ at the last supper, the temple is darkened, a luminous ray descends upon the cup, the blood boils within it. Then the divine light pales and fades away, daylight returns, the knights empty their chalices and eat the sacred bread which a mysterious hand has placed before them. While the chants are again being sung, all present form in procession and disappear in the sombre shades of the temple. . . . Much surprised, Parsifal remarks to Gurnemanz that he has understood nothing of this ceremony, and

the latter, irritated at finding him such a simpleton, angrily drives him from the temple.

Meanwhile Klingsor is on the watch. He knows that upon Parsifal depends the safety of the Grail; he evokes Kundry and commands her to seduce this innocent youth as she has already seduced Amfortas, that the hopes of the keeper of the Grail may be forever destroyed. The unhappy Kundry wants to refuse, but she must obey her master; she appears to Parsifal in all the radiance of her marvellous beauty. The latter, protected by his ignorance of evil, has passed without even a suspicion of danger into the midst of the flower-maidens; but when Kundry speaks to him affectionately of his mother, he allows himself to listen to her tender words of love, — a love which she offers him in place of the maternal affection which he has lost. She folds him in her arms and impresses a kiss upon his lips. Suddenly the veil is rent, Parsifal feels himself wounded as with the wound of Amfortas, and, filled with compassion for such cruel suffering, he longs to cure him of it. Kundry, seized with a passionate admiration for the young hero, beseeches him on her knees to grant her the favor of his love. Parsifal refuses; then she calls upon Klingsor, who appears with the sacred lance, and attempts to strike his enemy with it, but the weapon is arrested above the youth's head. The latter seizes it, and traces with it in the air the sign of the

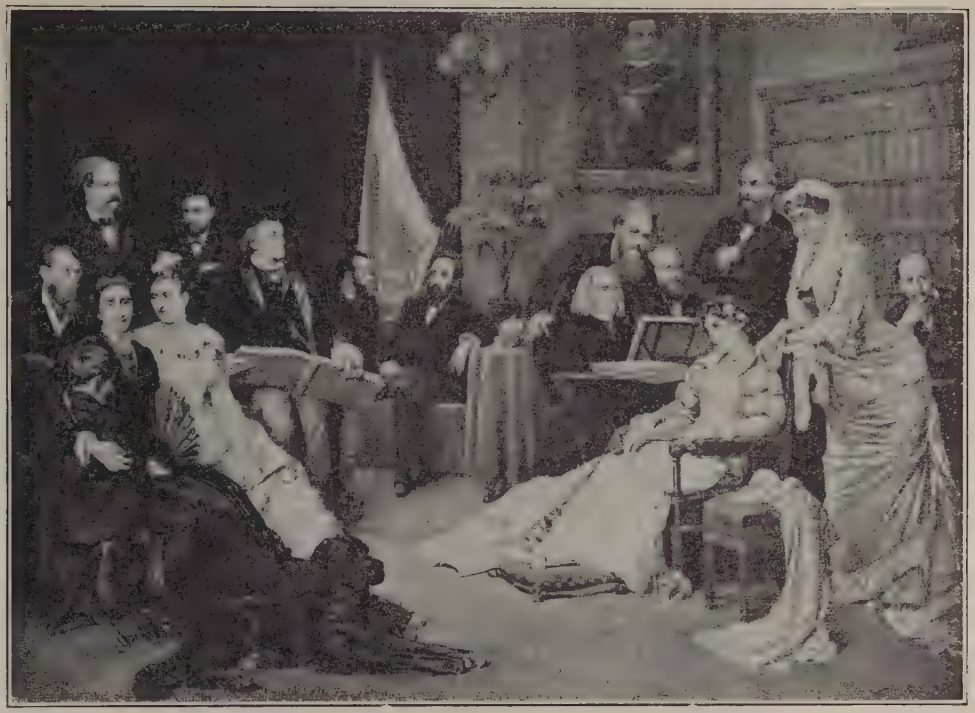
THE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE.
(*Vanity Fair*, London, May 19, 1877.)

cross; immediately all the enchantments of Klingsor are dispelled; the wonderful gardens become a parched and arid desert.

During the long period which has elapsed between the second and third acts, Gurnemanz has become an old man. He has established himself in a hermitage at the foot of the mountain of the Grail; on a certain Holy Friday he receives the unhappy Kundry, who humbly begs to become his servant. A knight arrives, covered with black armor, visor lowered, and lance in hand; Gurnemanz tells him that it is not permitted to come armed into the domain of the Grail; particularly on the day of the Saviour's death. The knight uncovers and Gurnemanz recognizes Parsifal and the sacred lance; he leads him to a fountain where Kundry bathes the feet of the traveller, who has wandered so far and suffered so much; then Gurnemanz anoints his head and consecrates him king of the Grail. He immediately baptizes the unfortunate Kundry, whose fountain of tears is opened at last; afterwards he heals the wound of Amfortas, and takes possession of the kingdom of the Grail. Kundry dies, her eyes fixed upon the sacred relic, and the assembled knights, following Amfortas, render homage to their redeemer and their new leader, Parsifal.

In this work Wagner has uniformly followed the precepts of his system; not a single aria or duet is to be found in it, nothing but recitatives and choruses and the orchestral symphony. Never has he so completely subordinated the music to the drama, since the tenor is not given a note to sing during the entire last scene of the first act, and in the third, after two or or three words, the prima donna is required to dumbly act the rest of her part, with all the pathetic power of which she is capable, without uttering a sound.

But on the other hand, never has he given so much importance to the mission of the *Liet motif*, and to the weaving



Fr. v. Lenbach. Siegfried. Cosima. Scaria. Richard Wagner. Materna Fr. Fischer. H. Levi. Fr. Brandt. Richter. Liszt. Betz. Gräfin Sch. Niemann. Gräfin U. v. Schukowsky.

RICHARD WAGNER AT BAYREUTH.—By G. Papperitz.

together of those motives which outline and characterize all the evolutions of the drama, — the interior action which is unfolded in the hearts of the personages, as well as the exterior action which one follows with the eyes; for such is the double aim of this genius, as mindful of incentives as of actions, as attentive to causes, as to effects. Aside from the choruses which give to some of the leading motives their full

REPRESENTATION OF PARSIFAL AT BAYREUTH IN 1882.
Kundry crouches at the feet of Parsifal (Act III., scene I.)

musical expansion, aside from Kundry's account of the death of Herzeleide, the mother of Parsifal, there is nothing for the voice but scraps of song, exclamations, fragments of the primordial motives, while these characteristic themes are fully carried out in the orchestra, which gives them an infinite variety of color and form; it is an admirable art, and quite

new, even under the pen of Richard Wagner, who had made only a beginning in the *Ring of the Nibelungen.*

Moreover, Wagner innovates here in respect to a prelude. One naturally expects a perfectly coherent piece in which the author sums up and condenses the whole drama with that extraordinary power in which he excels over all musicians. But the composer has inexhaustible resources, and finds new forms instead of always repeating himself. In the prelude of *Parsifal*, Wagner has simply wished to impress upon the hearer's memory the three or four essential motives of the Grail, of Easter, and of the Faith, upon which he is to erect the scaffolding of his lyric and religious poem.

THE BEARER OF THE HOLY GRAIL, in *Parsifal.*

To this end he first gives the simple themes successively, dividing them by periods of silence to make them more distinct; then, when he is satisfied that they have taken hold upon the hearer, he takes them up again and blends them in a meditative and religious *ensemble* of a luminous simplicity, notwithstanding the superposition of the themes. But the grand development remains subdued throughout, without a single *fortissimo*, without carrying the principal motive to a climax of power,

as the composer did in the case of *Lohengrin*, and later in *Tristan and Isolde*.[1] The whole work is characterized by a marvellous tenderness, solemnity and power which hold the hearer spell-bound, and leave upon his mind an indelible impression.

Whether he had entirely given up his Buddhist drama when he wrote *Parsifal*, or whether he simply had a presentiment that he would not have time to write a new work, Wagner several times announced that *Parsifal* would be his last work and his musical testament; therefore when it became a question of mounting it, he was more particular than ever, and desired to obtain, if possible, an execution superior to that of the *Nibelungen*. He had selected in advance, after much reflection, the best singers from the principal theatres of Germany; but from the very first studies he was compelled to recognize that the same artists could not sing this score for a month at a stretch, even with intervals of two or three days. He therefore engaged two basses for Gurnemanz; Siehr (of Munich) and Scaria (of Vienna); three tenors for Parsifal: Winkelman (of Vienna), Gudehus (of Dresden) and Joeger (of Bayreuth); two basses for Klingsor: Hill (of Schwerin) and Fuchs (of Munich); three sopranos for Kundry: Mmes. Materna (of Vienna), Marianne Brandt (of Berlin) and Malten (of Dresden). These artists divided among them the sixteen performances of *Parsifal*, and thus

[1] In the month of Oct. 1882, following the representation of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, this prelude was heard in Paris, and curious were the estimates of it furnished by the newspaper critics. This one, affecting wisdom, esteemed it "*an excellent page of harmony*"; that one, who must have been blind and deaf, affirmed that "*the piece commenced with a violin solo*"; the other one declared that "*the best thing about it was an imitation of the unison of l'Africaine.*" Where could he discover this strange analogy? Probably in the first five measures, played, it is true, in unison by the stringed and reed instruments, but having no further connection with the effect of sonority obtained by Meyerbeer. Without giving further heed to these learned criticisms, this *excellent page of harmony*, as one called it, is a masterpiece in itself, and is one of the most beautiful things that Wagner ever wrote.

REPRESENTATION OF "PARSIFAL," AT BAYREUTH, IN 1882.

Parsifal uncovers the Grail. (Act III., last scene.) After an original drawing by E. Döppler, Jr.

the regular execution for the entire series was secured. There was, however, only one Amfortas (Reichman), notwithstanding the importance of the part, and only one Titurel, (Kindermann). As to the pages, knights and flower-maidens, these minor rôles were taken by artists who ordinarily held the first places in their respective theatres.

Some of the artists refused all remuneration, judging themselves sufficiently paid by the honor, and as to the others, they accepted very small compensation, considering the devotion and love which they showed for the work. The general direction was confided to the leader of the orchestra at the Munich theatre, Hermann Levi, one of the master's most ardent followers, and who conducted these performances with a truly religious conviction. Among so many singers there were necessarily different degrees of talent, but the palm belonged without question to Scaria, whose touching and noble simplicity, perfect diction and magnificent voice did wonders in the rôle of Gurnemanz; to Mmes. Materna and Brandt, both admirable as Kundry; finally to Mlle. Malten, the most bewitching Kundry that has ever been seen.[1]

Notwithstanding all Wagner's efforts, notwithstanding his repeated appeals to the patrons of the enterprise and the indefatigable co-operation of these latter, the Bayreuth theatre did not reopen its doors from 1876 until the representations of *Parsifal* were announced for July and August, 1882. The first performance took place on July 28th, and was hon-

[1] *From Strasburg to Bayreuth*, by Gustave Fischbach. By a striking coincidence, Scaria died in 1886 at Basewitz, near Dresden, during a representation at Bayreuth of that *Parsifal*, in which he had won the most brilliant success of his career. This great artist was incomparable in the *Nibelungen*, where his heroic stature, and his voice of thunder served to excellent purpose. He seems to have owed the full development of his talent to some lessons which he took of Garcia, at London; on his return he concluded an engagement at the Dessau theatre; then sung at Leipsic and at Vienna. After Wagner's death he had become the habitual supervisor of the Bayreuth performances. He died at the age of forty-five.

ored by the presence of the grand-duke and grand-duchess of Mecklenberg, the crown prince of Saxe-Weimar and the princess his wife, the princess of Edimburg, etc. This was another glorious evening for Wagner, who, of course, could not refrain from speaking; but, as M. Paul Lindau has kindly remarked, he spoke only three times, and not so badly as might have been feared. The first time he said: "But do

Im Zauberspiegel vom heilgen Gral
Sah Klingsor nahn den Parsifal,
Doch heute sah er mit Vergnügen
Das Nahn von vielen Extrazügen.
Extrazug nach Bayreuth
H. Lüders

POSTAL CARD DESIGNED AND PUBLISHED AT BAYREUTH

on the occasion of the representation of *Parsifal*.

On the cars one reads: *Special train for Bayreuth*, and the four lines above explain the meaning of the design: —

Before the Magic Mirror of the Grail,
Klingsor beheld the approach of Parsifal;
But now he sees a nobler vision still,
The "Bayreuth special" puffing up the hill.

not applaud!" the second time: "Now then, applaud!" the third and last time! "You have applauded too late!"[1]

The sixteen promised representations of *Parsifal* were all given, and given successfully, notwithstanding the prophets

[1] *Richard Wagner*, by M. Paul Lindau (Messrs. Hinrichsen, Paris).

of evil who predicted that the work would not live through more than two or three performances; they were terminated Aug. 28, on which evening Wagner gave himself the pleasure of directing the third act, without being perceived by the spectators. At the end there was a ceremony similar to that which had closed the *Nibelungen* performances; the curtain parted, the whole *personnel*, singers, musicians, etc., appeared grouped upon the stage, and Wagner, keeping his place as leader of the orchestra, tendered them his thanks, to which the entire house responded with hearty cheers. But the principal cause for rejoicing was the fact that there remained, after deducting all expenses, a profit of seventy-five thousand marks, which were added to the reserve funds of the central committee. These funds were directed towards the double end of assuring the continuation of the Bayreuth festivals, and of furnishing to poor artists and amateurs the means to attend these representations. From that day the future of the theatre appeared guaranteed, and the possibility of giving further performances of *Parsifal* there was not doubted.[1]

The performance of Aug. 25th was honored by the presence of the crown prince of Germany. As he was directing some military manœuvres on the Bamberg side, the fancy seized him to hear *Parsifal*, so much talked about, and between two movements of troops, he fell upon Bayreuth; he watched the spectacle from the central box of the gallery, and his estimation of it quickly reached Wagner. The next day a friend, come from a distance, paid Wagner a visit in the great audience-room where he sat during the *entr'actes*; he found him very gay and lively, always irreproachable in his dress *de petite bourgeoise* — black redingote, white piqué

[1] *Parsifal* has indeed been given every year at Bayreuth, except in 1885. The remounting in 1884 was aided by notes which Mme. Wagner took at the rehearsals of 1882 and 1883. These minute notes formed a veritable *memoire*, which they had reproduced in order that everybody concerned in the execution might be provided with a copy.

waistcoat and gray trousers — fresh-shaved, his color animated, his eyes twinkling under his spectacles. "Ah! there you are!" cried he jovially on perceiving his visitor. "Have you seen the 'Prince of Prussia?' He was here yesterday.... Do you know he was pleased, quite pleased; oh! he is a famous musician.... he has verified some tedious passages, pointed out several faults of taste; no matter, he is enchanted. The defile of knights especially delighted him. Their measured steps impressed him very much. Never had he seen anything like it, and he will surely make use of his observations for the Prussian infantry. Oh yes! dear friend, the *Kronprinz* has very good taste!"[1] And while speaking, Wagner acted out his discourse, imitated the step of the chevaliers, took long strides, and continued without ceasing his side-splitting laughter.

He had decidedly taken to heart the three hundred thalers of the father, and by way of relieving himself he made sport of the son.

[1] The crown-prince of Germany had certainly seen and liked in *Parsifal* something besides the martial steps of the knights, for during the festivals of 1886, he returned to Bayreuth expressly to hear *Parsifal*, which he had not heard since its first season. Moreover, since the death of the king of Bavaria, Berlin seems to take a special interest in the manifestation of German national art, and the question of giving a decisive aid to the Bayreuth work has been agitated there.

HISTORIC REMARK OF THE MASTER, JULY 25, 1882.

Richard Wagner to Mme. Materna: "The heat is insupportable to-day."
(*Der junge Kikeriki*, July 30, 1882.)

CHAPTER XIV

DEATH AND OBSEQUIES OF RICHARD WAGNER — CONTINUATION OF HIS WORK — HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS AUBER, ROSSINI, MEYERBEER, SCHUMANN, ETC. — THE MAN IN HIS INTIMATE RELATIONS, THE ARTIST IN PUBLIC

ESS than two months after the *Parsifal* representations, for which he had been obliged to make extraordinary exertions, and which had left him much fatigued, Wagner, by advice of his physician, departed with his whole family for Italy, and established himself in Venice, on the Grand Canal, at the Palazzo Vendramin, estate of the Count of Chambord. There could be no doubt about the real feebleness of his health, and the reaction which was manifest in him after the performances at Bayreuth was all the more violent, since he had given himself no quarter on the field of battle, and had employed a superhuman vivacity for an old man of sixty-nine.

Scaria relates that one day, during the rehearsals of *Parsifal*, Wagner was taken with an attack of asthma, so that he fell backwards upon a couch, his face blue and distorted by convulsions. The crisis was quickly passed, however, and when upon his feet again, Wagner simply remarked: "Once more I have floored death"! One of his friends, Prof. Standhartner, a physician of high standing in Vienna, had examined him during the summer, and had noted the rapid progress of the heart trouble from which he had long suffered. Wagner, although not informed of the result of the examination, must have felt, himself, to what an extent his forces were diminishing, how much more frequent and violent the crises were be-

coming; for he, usually so gay and enthusiastic, had become prey to the deepest melancholy since his arrival at Venice. One day he said to a friend that *Parsifal* would certainly be his last work, because he was going to die, and on several occasions he expressed the fear of being taken before he had assured the future of his only son. And yet he strove against this disquietude, or else he had not an exact presentiment that the end was very near; for he employed himself actively with preparing the *Parsifal* performances at Bayreuth for the spring of 1883, and was in correspondence on the subject with the two of his interpreters whom he carried in his heart, — Scaria and Mme. Materna.

LUIGI TREVISAN.
Richard Wagner's Venetian Gondolier.
Drawn by Giacomo Favretto.

He had already experienced two attacks, one in St. Mark's square, another at the Benedetto Marcello Lyceum, and he was expressly commanded to avoid all violent emotion. On Tuesday, February 13, 1883, as he was about to step into his gondola, some discussion arose, and he gave way to a fit of anger; suddenly he started up from his seat, choking, and cried, "I feel very badly!" He fell fainting. They carried him to his bed, and when his physician, Dr. Keppler, arrived in all haste, he found him dead in the arms of his wife, who believed him sleeping. In drawing his last breath he indistinctly murmured a few words, which

some have thought to be a last call to his servant, Betty Bürckel; others, a supreme command to his son: "*Siegfried soll*. . . Siegfried must. . ." When she was forced to yield to evidence, Mme. Wagner was overcome by grief and despair. She insisted upon remaining alone with the body, day and night, so that it became necessary to almost drag her from the room at the end of twenty-two hours; for four days she refused all nourishment, and had her hair cut that it might be placed in her husband's coffin. Not only did she persist in seeing no one, and shutting herself up in an absolute solitude which she maintains even to-day, at least for the public; but she objected, as did the whole family, to having a death mask taken. It was only by ruse that Dr. Keppler succeeded in getting the sculptor Benvenuti into the room, where he took an imprint of the mask which was immediately put under seal, to be offered to the family after the great sorrow should have been somewhat appeased, and peace of mind restored.[1]

The city of Venice at first proposed to give Richard Wagner a public funeral, but his widow objected to the project, and so it was abandoned. The body, embalmed by Prof. Hofmann of Berlin, left Venice the following Friday, in the midst of

[1] Dr. Keppler, consulted upon the illness and last days of Wagner, addressed the following information to M. H. Perl, who has reproduced it in his book, *Richard Wagner at Venice* (Augsburg, 1883): "Richard Wagner was afflicted with hypertrophy of the heart already far advanced, affecting especially the right ventricle, and with fatty degeneration; he suffered besides from dilatation of the stomach and from a rupture which the prolonged use of a badly made truss had greatly aggravated." He further explains that the bad feelings which Wagner experienced during the latter part of his life proceeded from the stomach and intestines which influenced the movements of the heart in such a way that death was produced by a rupture of the right ventricle. Add to this, says he, Wagner's agitated life, his passion to discuss upon matters of art, science or politics, and one may see that the master was daily at the mercy of an accident; as to the precise occasion which determined this sudden death, no one can even conjecture in regard to it. He finishes by saying that he had especially prescribed, besides the application of a properly adjusted truss, some abdominal massages, and restrained, so far as possible, internal dosing, Wagner having the very bad habit of mixing all the remedies which different physicians had successively prescribed for him.

THE GRAND CANAL, VENICE, AND THE PALAZZO VENDRAMINI.

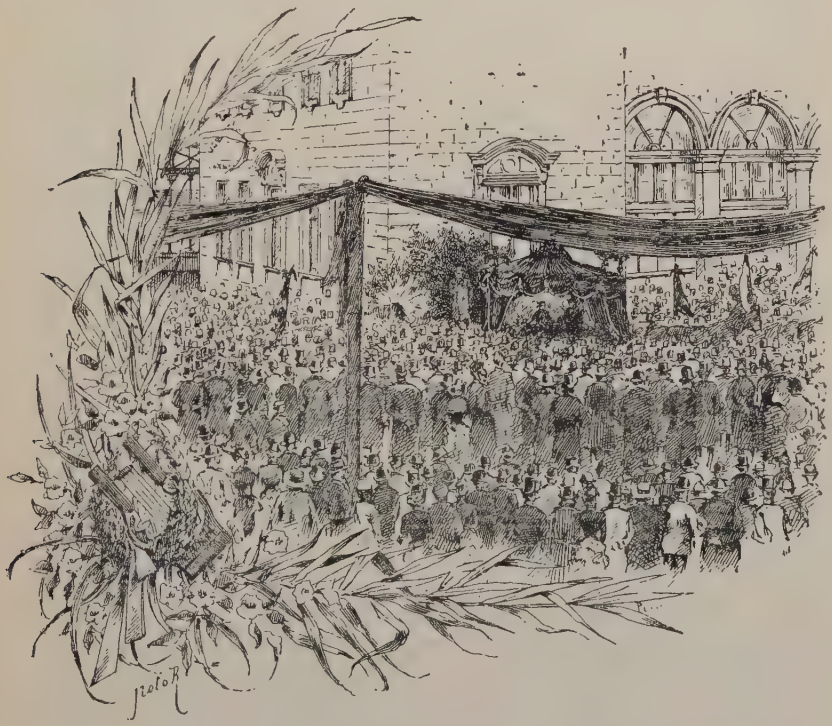
From a photograph.

an enormous throng of people; it was accompanied by Dr. Keppler as far as Verona, and it was there that one of Wagner's friends, M. de Balegand, was able to join the funeral escort, composed, besides the family, of Herr and Frau Gross, the painter Joukowsky, Hans Richter, and delegates from the Wagnerian Associations of Berlin, Vienna, and other cities, who had hastened to Venice at the first signal; finally, wherever the funeral train stopped, at Verona, at Botzen, at Inspruck, at Munich, deputations came to salute the remains of the great artist and to place flowers upon his coffin. On Saturday evening the body arrived at the Bayreuth station, where a guard of honor furnished by the gymnastic societies of the city, kept watch until the hour of the funeral ceremony, fixed for the following day, Sunday, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

The grounds about the station were decorated with banners covered with crêpe, which bore the names of Wagner's works; three carriages had been filled with wreathes, more than two hundred of them, dispatched from all parts, and among which was a large one in laurel sent by Johannes Brahms.[1]

[1] The wreath sent by Brahms has been catalogued under No. 46 in the list drawn up by the *Bayreuther Tagblatt*. There were only two wreaths from France, one sent by M. A. L.; the other, which does not appear on the list, by a young Austrian, Emmanuel von Graffenried. Later, all the wreaths were artistically arranged in the two theatre parlors, one of which was the master's private room, and in each of these rooms a small bust of Wagner has been placed, one of them on a bracket, the other on a sort of little altar. These parlors, especially the one occupied by the master, and which is named *Kranzzimmer* (Crown Room), are visited by many admirers at the times of the Bayreuth representations. On crossing the threshold of this commemorative chapel, one is filled with a deep and sincere emotion. The semi-obscurity which reigns there, the striking decorations with the bust of Wagner in the midst, give this room an almost sepulchral aspect. The walls entirely disappear beneath the mass of wreaths which hang upon them; the floor also is strewn with them; the air is heavy with the odor of withered leaves and flowers. Among the relics found there, one is attracted by a small piece of black-board under glass, bearing these words in chalk: *Morgen Generalprobe*,

In the distance rose the dome of the Wagner theatre, from which floated a large flag with the German colors, veiled with crape. King Ludwig of Bavaria was represented by Count Papenheim; the grand dukes of Saxe-Weimar and of Meiningen by the intendants of the court theatres. At four o'clock



FUNERAL OF RICHARD WAGNER AT BAYREUTH.

the coffin, placed in a hearse drawn by four horses, was conducted, to the sounds of the Siegfried funeral march, be-

Wagner (*To-morrow, General rehearsal, Wagner*). These are the last, it seems, which were written by the master in his theatre. An immense wreath, whose ribbon bears the inscription: *To the best and the noblest of masters, from his grateful pupil, Emil Scaria*, equally impresses the pilgrims to the *Kranzzimmer*.

Madame Wagner, it is said, yielding to the entreaties of her acquaintances, has abstained even to this day from entering this solemn sanctuary.

fore a high tribune, where the burgomaster Muncker, in the name of the city, and the banker Feustel, in the name of the administrative counsel of the theatre, addressed a supreme farewell to the great master; then the *Liederkranz* of Bay-

RICHARD WAGNER'S TOMB AT BAYREUTH

still open, on the day after the funeral.

The tomb-stone, to-day almost entirely covered with ivy, measures 5 ft. 6 in. in width, 10 ft. 5 in. in length, 1 ft. in thickness.

reuth sung the piece which Wagner had composed for Weber's obsequies.

Immediately after, the procession, lighted by torches, marched to the tolling of bells through streets filled with

RICHARD WAGNER.

From a family group, taken shortly before his death.
(Not in French edition.)

flowers and flags, towards the villa Wahnfried. At the entrance of the garden the throng silently halted, while the body was received by the family, except Mme. Wagner, who was crushed beneath her load of sorrow. As to Franz Liszt, who was in Pesth at the time, he was so overcome by the news of this sudden death that he was detained at home, for fear of the consequences which the poignant emotions of such a ceremony might entail.[1]

The disciples of the master then carried the coffin in their arms to the entrance of the vault which Wagner had had built for himself, and in front of which he had interred his faithful dog, with the touching inscription: "Here Russ reposes and waits." The friends of the family and the official personages alone followed the body to its last resting place; but no discourse was pronounced over it, and in response to Wagner's oft-expressed desire, they simply said the prayers and benedictions used in the Protestant Church. At the close of the ceremony all retired; in death, as in life, the man was guarded by his dog.

The next day, a friend who had not been able to join the funeral procession, went alone to Bayreuth and placed flowers upon the scarcely-closed tomb of him who had brought peace to his soul and joy into his life. It was King Ludwig,

[1] As soon as he was able Liszt went to his daughter, and he keenly felt the rather cool reception given him by Mme. Wagner, who was completely absorbed by her grief, and had no desire to be comforted. After this violent sorrow had somewhat abated, the most affectionate relations existed, as before, between father and daughter; Liszt went regularly to Bayreuth, and it was there, in 1886, that death struck him at the threshold of the "temple" where Wagnerian art, of which he had been the first apostle, found its final consecration. And his last voluntary act was to be carried to the theatre, in spite of the doctors, in order to attend the first performance of *Tristan and Isolde!* This was on July 25th; the following Saturday, July 31, he breathed his last. Sad year this, which saw disappear, one after another, three of the most solid sustainers of Wagner's art work, — the King Ludwig II., Scaria, the singer *par excellence*, finally Liszt, the artist, Wagner's precursor and life-long friend.

more artist and philosopher than king, who for twenty years had marked an unalterable attachment for the master, and who, now that the master was dead, was to transfer his solicitude to the offspring of his genius, — to his masterpieces. Nothing could be more touching than this affection which the great master had inspired in the youthful prince; no spectacle more unique than that of this king flinging off court etiquette to live the poet and the artist with a man of genius whom he met on an equal footing as he would have done a sovereign friend. Ludwig II. and Wagner were like father and son. And as if this companionship had been indispensable to him, as if life had become too heavy a burden to bear alone, scarcely three years after this prop had been taken from him, the young man went forth to seek the old man, — in death! . . .[1]

Wagner had left behind him no fortune, and the uneasiness which he had manifested in regard to the future of his son Siegfried was only too well justified; surely, in these last moments he must have felt how improvident he had shown himself, to have put no check, even after he had a son, upon his luxurious and prodigal tastes which had kept him all his life in a state of golden poverty, a sumptuous existence with debts in proportion. One day in Munich, the principal upholsterer of the city openly abused him in a theatre,

[1] Munich, through the king of Bavaria, having been until recently the centre of the Wagnerian world — Bayreuth aside — it is interesting to know the exact estimation of Wagner's different operas in the Bavarian capital. Usually they were played each year as follows: *Rienzi* once; *The Flying Dutchman* five or six times; *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* four or five times; *Tristan and Isolde* twice; the *Meistersinger* three times; the entire *Nibelungen Ring* two or three times; the *Walküre* and *Siegfried* twice, and the *Götterdämmerung* once — when they played it at all. Furthermore the price varied according to the popularity of the piece, and these prices were unhesitatingly fixed in advance by the court intendant, Baron von Perfall, himself a composer and but moderately disposed in Wagner's favor, although he had been chosen, at the time, to direct the Conservatory organized in accordance with the reformer's ideas. *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, the *Walküre* and *Siegfried* brought the highest prices, and *Tristan and Isolde* the lowest.

catching him by the coat-tails, vowing that he would not let him go until the debt was paid, and making such a disturbance that Wagner, to get rid of the man, signed him a check on the royal treasury; the upholsterer dunned, the king paid.

Wagner might have been a rich man; all the German theatres have made his works the most solid basis of their repertoire, and the publishers paid him fabulous prices for his scores[1]; is it not said that Messrs. Schott, of Mayence, paid two hundred and forty thousand marks for *Parsifal?* And yet he was always in a tight place, and all the money which came to him was recklessly squandered in advance, on house decorations, living expenses, and even his clothes. In this connection, a series of letters from Wagner to his dressmaker, sold some years since, shows in a very amusing light his childish eccentricities in regard to his toilet, and his wild extravagancies in regard to everything touching his comfort.

FROU-FROU WAGNER.

(Grætz *Der Floh*, Vienna, June 24, 1887.)

[1] In nearly all the German cities he is given a marked preference over the other composers. During the season 1876–77 he obtained, in Vienna, thirty-seven representations, against Meyerbeer thirty-four, Verdi twenty-nine, Rossini fifteen, etc.; in Berlin he counted also thirty-seven representations, against Mozart seventeen, Meyerbeer fifteen, Weber fourteen, etc. During the season 1884–85 at Berlin, he attained forty representations, against Weber twenty, Lortzing twenty, Meyerbeer sixteen, etc.

For Richard Wagner had a dressmaker, one of the most celebrated in Vienna, Mlle. Bertha, and it was she who made all his night-robes and vests of delicate rose-color, pale blue or scarlet satin, with orange or lilac ribbons, not to forget the lace shirts and the satin shoes which composed his ordinary house toilet. This outfit cost him not less than $15,000 for a single year. But Richard Wagner was more prompt to order than to pay. He even embellished his orders with sketches, to explain more clearly how the ruche of his night-robe should become, around the bottom, a rich and beautiful garniture half a yard in width, etc. But when he was asked for money he made a good deal of talk about it, sent some instalments, and demanded more time. One of the strangest of his luxurious tastes was his love for silks and satins, which became a veritable mania with age. He had the habit of carrying with him when he travelled, all the satin necessary to decorate the apartments that he would occupy *en route;* in Venice, at the Palazzo Vendramini, the room in which he breathed his last was entirely hung with pink, pale blue and Nile green satin. Such follies sufficiently indicate what a spendthrift the man was, and, indeed, money was his standard of value for everything.

One day when some rather vague propositions for representing *Lohengrin* at the Paris Opera were transmitted to him, he replied: "I can only judge how much they want to represent my works, by what they are willing to pay for the privilege"; and in saying this he was only expressing what the majority of composers think, especially those who affect a supreme indifference for this world's goods. In regard to his son's future, he was beginning rather late in the day, at the age of sixty-nine, to agitate himself on this subject. Nevertheless his anxieties were bound to be respected by his many admirers, and the management of the Wagner Theatre decided to apply the entire proceeds from a per-

formance given at Aix-la-Chapelle to start a benefit fund for Siegfried Wagner. This example was followed by many of the German theatres, and it was not the least beautiful homage rendered to the man and to the artist, this eagerness on the part of the public to protect, to adopt, as it were, his young son.

Adolphe Gross, a Bayreuth banker, and one of the most ardent promoters of the work, was the master's executor and young Siegfried's guardian; it was he who guaranteed the representations of *Parsifal*, the day after Wagner died, and who continued to watch over his interests in all lands with an indefatigable zeal. In the spring of 1883, some Wagnerites, under the direction of the Count von Spork, called a general meeting at Nuremberg, and there was sealed the union of all the Wagnerian Societies on the face of the globe into one universal Wagnerian Association, open to all (the annual assessment, outside of voluntary gifts, being only one dollar), and which had for its principal end the perpetual maintenance of the model representations at Bayreuth. Each society, preserving its own individuality through a special representative, was linked to the central committee composed of nine members, of whom the honorary president was Franz Liszt. This universal Wagnerian Association obtained a surprising success, for, when only three years old, it was represented in two hundred and forty cities, and counted about fifty-five hundred members scattered all over the globe.

Richard Wagner always claimed that, so far as he was concerned at least, the man was inseparable from the artist, and it is with this bold affirmation that he opened, in 1851, his *Communication to my Friends*. "I address," said he, "these communications to my friends; for I cannot be understood except by those who feel the need and the inclination to understand me, and such cannot fail to be my friends.

But I cannot hold as such those who pretend to like the *artist* in me, while feeling that they must refuse their sympathy for the *man*. If the separation of the artist from the man be as senseless as the separation of the soul from the body, it is certain that the artist could never be loved, nor his art understood, unless he were loved also as a man (at least in an involuntary and unreasoning fashion) and unless his life were understood as well as his words."

THE OLD MASTER RICHARD WAGNER ARRIVES UNANNOUNCED AT THE HEAVENLY MUSIC HALL.

"Bravo, Children! It is already a pleasue to be here. I am seized with a desire to compose again."

(*Nebelspalter*, Zurich, Feb. 17, 1883.)

But this affirmation so boldly launched, does not prevent human events from following their natural course. Wagner, in private, could be a most gracious, jovial man, prompt to insinuate himself into the hearts of those who came into his presence, for he made in this way many friends; but an artist, a creator, especially when gifted with such marvellous genius, addresses himself to the general public, and nothing can prevent each individual from feeling, without seeing the man, a greater or less admiration for his works, a greater or less sympathy for his character.

That this kind of judgment springs rather from an impression than from reflection, I do not deny; but it is impossible for an artist to escape it, and, moreover, Wagner especially would have had too much to lose, to limit in this way the number of his true admirers.

When one takes the man and the artist together, when one embraces at a single glance his life, his masterpieces and his writings, one is impressed by his grandeur of conception, his solidity against attack, his firmness of conviction. When one looks a little closer, without permitting himself to be dazzled by the flashing outbursts of the god or by the grand speeches of the fanatics, one perceives that the idol has feet of clay. As an artist and creator, Wagner has no peer, and his genius, like his works, commands unbounded admiration; as a man, he is without *noblesse*, and escapes none of the frailties of human nature; on the contrary, as he was excessive in all things, he exaggerated them and carried them to an extreme.

That he was a man of profound egotism and excessive pride is beyond question, and this disposition to self-centre all things is so natural, I was going to say necessary, to artists, occupied solely with their work and their glory, that it was not worth while being surprised at it. That he loved to pose as a martyr, while knowing full well how to play his cards to the best advantage, may also be passed over; but what was really ungracious on his part was his undisguised ingratitude towards those who had befriended him, when they could not or would not longer serve his interests. And this applies to nations and to sovereigns as well as to brother musicians. When, instead of considering his writings from a merely theoretic point of view, one connects them with the events which precede or follow them, one is struck by the ease with which this man of bronze bends himself to conjunctures, and stoops to flatter those whom he wishes to

PALAZZO VENDRAMINI, VENICE, WHERE RICHARD WAGNER DIED.

influence, while abusing individuals, nations and kings from whom he no longer has anything to gain. The theories themselves do not change, but their literary development is subject to sensible inflections, very curious to follow, and unfortunately very easy to explain, since the cause may be invariably traced to personal interest.

For instance, when he receives the reply from Berlin that the king cannot accept the dedication of *Tannähuser* without hearing some fragment from it, say, on parade, he is indignant, fumes and rages, and continues nevertheless to negotiate underhand, until the king decides to have his *Rienzi* played for his anniversary. To whom is he principally indebted for this decision? To Meyerbeer. Who had directed his first steps in Paris, had really kept him from starvation by recommending him to Schlesinger, had put him *en rapport* with the Opera, so that at that time his benefactor's departure from Paris was a veritable disaster for him? Meyerbeer, always Meyerbeer. Now we know how Wagner afterwards thanked him for these benefits. It is possible, I go farther, to admit that Richard Wagner in launching his *Judaism in Music* (1850) may have been right in all general points discussed; he might have written anything he chose against Mendelssohn, with whom he had never had any relations worth mentioning, but he should have employed more reserve in regard to Meyerbeer.

Wagner privately related that Meyerbeer had himself committed an act of treason, *a propos* of Schlesinger. Some time after his first stay in Paris, he learned, so he said, that in giving him an official letter of recommendation to Schlesinger, he had sent by post direct to Schlesinger a second letter, which ran about as follows: "A young musician, very ambitious and very fidgety, is pestering me with his solicitations. In order to get rid of him I have given him a letter which he will hand to you, in which I warmly recommend him to

you; but you will do for him only what seems good to you." Even admitting that there were two letters, which is very improbable, it seems that Schlesinger was influenced only by the one which Wagner brought him, since he ordered articles of him for his magazine, and arrangements for his publishing house; and, after trying to get the *Faust* overture performed at the Conservatoire, he produced the one to *Christopher Columbus* at the concerts of the *Gazette Musicale*, which paper was for years wholly at the disposal of the young foreigner. Thus the editor is cleared; as to Meyerbeer, suppose he really had played this double game, was he any the less instrumental in getting *Rienzi* accepted afterwards at Berlin, upon the supplications of the author?

Whatever the truth may have been, it seems that Wagner always treasured up this treason, of which he remained convinced; he attributed to the knavery of the "Jew," a great proportion of the misfortunes and miseries which he experienced in Paris, and this resentment never left him. The truth is that Meyerbeer's remarkable financial success had from the outset haunted his dreams and disturbed his peace of mind. When his pamphlet on *Judaism* was given to the world, it created much lively discussion in Germany, but it was absolutely ignored in France up to 1869. Nevertheless, as soon as it is a question of playing *Tannhäuser* in Paris, that is to say, in 1860, the prudent writer extenuates as much as possible his attacks against Meyerbeer by his *Letter on Music*, in order not to offend the Parisians by being too severe on the operas of a composer whom they have always admired. He speaks then of "captivating beauties," and defends himself, in case his libel may have reached our ears, from ever having wished to cast the slightest shadow upon this great celebrity, in criticising some weak points, less attributable to the artist than to the *genre* itself of the opera.

Let us continue. *Tannhäuser* is represented at Paris by the express wish of the Emperor, who understands very little of it, possibly having little love for music, but who comes, nevertheless, to applaud at the first two performances; very well, in *Art and Politics* (1868), instead of keeping to generalities, and charging only the crowd of dandies with driving out *Tannhäuser*, he feels impelled to direct a stinging thrust against the emperor in person. He exalts the free *German youth* who won battles to the sound of the Lyre and the Sword (*Leier und Schwert*, allusion to Koerner and Weber) and who drove back the French invasion when the mercenary troops of the monarchs could not conquer them; he represents Napoleon I. as astonished at his defeat, looking about for a reason and finding none; "Perhaps his nephew is the only European ruler who can respond to that question with veritable wisdom; *he knows and fears the German youth*."

However, this pamphlet, *German Art and German Politics*, is the one in which Wagner shows on the whole the most independence of spirit. It appeared in 1868, scarcely two years after Sadowa, when the Germans of the South, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, etc., the old allies of Austria, were far from being assimilated by Prussia, and Wagner, turning already to the side of the conqueror, celebrated the Hohenzollern victories over Bavaria, that Bavaria whose king had done so much for him, and from which he still desired to obtain at Munich the establishment of a German theatre according to his dreams. 'Prussia alone," said he, "preserved a military organization, sprung from Germany's soaring period; with this last remnant of the German spirit, exterminated everywhere else, the throne of Prussia, half a century later, won the battle of Königsgrætz, to the astonishment of the entire world," etc.

This eminently personal study is clearly directed against the influence of France; it wou'd seem, indeed, that Wagner

had nothing more to expect from the French amateurs after the defeat of *Tannhäuser*, and yet the very next year it was a question of playing *Rienzi* at Paris. Then the writer cajoled a bit, and softened his recriminations, in the letter written to Mme. Judith Mendès, expressly for publication; he knew, said he, that he had numerous and excellent friends in Paris; he appreciated infinitely the weight and value of the marks of sympathy which the French people had given him, and if he did not go there, it was not because he scorned a success in Paris, on the contrary, etc., etc. The next year came the war, the defeat of France, and Wagner launched *A Capitulation!*

After the lapse of some years, and by a sudden and unexpected change in public opinion, his works seemed about to triumph in France; then he wrote the letter to M. G. Monod, made public after his death, in which he sets out to explain that he was rallying Germany and not France in this pamphlet: "Take notice that all which I have written on the subject of the French spirit I wrote in German, exclusively for the Germans; it is clear then that I have had no intention of offending or of stirring up the French, but simply wished to turn my compatriots from their imitation of France, by bidding them to remain faithful to their own genius if they wished to accomplish anything of value. . . . But who will have the intelligence and penetration to recognize that in the writing for which I have been the most reproached, written at the worst moment of the war, in a bitterly ironical mood, my sole object has been to ridicule the state of the German theatre. Call to mind the conclusion of this farce. The intendants and directors of the German theatres tumble into besieged Paris in order to capture for their theatres all the novelties in the way of ballet pieces."

But why exonerate himself? Need an artist have eyes for anything in the world except his art? Wagner was not the sworn enemy of any particular individual or nation, not even France;

he was an enemy to those only who loved not his music. And, therefore, had he not the right to lay the blame on France, when, in the German lands themselves, he was flattering now Munich, now Berlin? After Sadowa, when he thought he had found in the future emperor of Germany a prince likely to second his views, he had exalted the conqueror of Bavaria; as soon as the old emperor's indifference to music was established, he dropped him, and, in *The Work and the Mission of my Life*, written after the *Nibelungen* performances, he did not hesitate to cast a few slings at the sovereign who had not been able to stand the Trilogy, nor wished to devote to Bayreuth any of the millions paid over by France. One is a soldier in Prussia, an artist in Bavaria, —and the conclusion arrived at is, —long live Ludwig II.!

How right he was to utter this cry of gratitude to the young king to whom he owed so much, and how much better he would have done never to have solicited elsewhere an aid and encouragement which he could obtain only from Ludwig II.! Without this enthusiastic prince, without the exceptional companion which he had the good fortune to meet towards the end of his life, Wagner might not have finished the *Nibelungen* nor composed *Parsifal*. The king came to him as a deliverer and saviour at the hour when all had abandoned him, and Wagner had well felt from the first moment that this meant salvation for himself and assured life for his art work. "What do you think?" wrote he to a friend a short time after his first interview with the king. "The most unexpected thing, and the only thing which could save me has really come to pass! A queen gave to the world in the very same year of the first performance of my *Tannhäuser*, the good genius of my life, he who was to bring me in course of time salvation and consolation; it seems as if he had been sent from heaven. . . ."

Why is it that the sharpest, sourest people, those who

should be the most hardened against false compliments, have always a weak point, and are, underneath their crusty exterior, the easiest to wheedle when their vanity is tickled? They pay no compliment which has not a double meaning, and if one gives them but a coating of flattery, they will not flinch under the worst kind of a drubbing. Such was Berlioz, such was Wagner. It is a pity, when one admires these two great composers, to see with what ingenuous good faith they repeat and consign to posterity the most overwhelming eulogiums. Wagner, especially, has devoted two long articles to his relations with Auber and Rossini; truly the sly Italian and the cunning Parisian could not have had much trouble in making sport of the slow-witted German.

With Rossini, whose raillery was more biting, he was a little on his guard; with Auber, on the contrary, he was so completely taken in that he repaid his fine and penetrating epigrams with an astounding eulogy of *La Muette de Portici*. During the studies of *Tannhäuser* the two musicians were wont to meet every evening on the stairs of Tortoni, and Auber would inquire pleasantly as to the progress of the rehearsals; he wished above all to know if there would be sumptuous settings, a rich *mise en scène*, and when satisfied on this point he joyfully rubbed his hands, exclaiming: "*Ah, there will be a spectacle!* be easy, it will be a success!" And Wagner, by exchange of civility, tried to talk to him about *la Circassienne* which was then running at the *Opera Comique*. "Ah!" said Auber modestly, "let us leave the farces in peace!" Then Wagner praised *Lestocq*, which he had had occasion to mount at Magdeburg and which had won a great success there; he did not explain that this work had not remained in favor in Germany like *Pré aux Clercs* and other trifles, and Auber's only response, as he regarded him with half-closed eyes, was: "*Que voulez-vous, c'est le genre!*" In an excess of self-conceit and *naïveté*, Wagner reported

that Auber, listening to one of Beethoven's symphonies at the Conservatoire, had declared that he "understood nothing of it," and he added "that he understood no more of *Tannhäuser*."

Rossini was less of what one would call a dry joker than Auber; on the contrary, he was full of noisy fun. His *bon mots* were heard right and left, and as they created much hilarity, it disturbed Wagner a little, who thought him at bottom "the only man truly great and worthy of admiration whom he had thus far met in the musical world." And all because the maestro had once whispered in his ear, with a contrite mien, that he, Rossini, ought to have been born in Germany, and that then his destiny would have been accomplished. "*I had the ability*," concluded he, "*and I would have been able to accomplish something*." And Rossini, seeing him accept this enormous humbug, developed and amplified the idea with an inexhaustible animation, without his companion suspecting the farce for a single instant. What more cruel — and more *naïve?*

THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY AND RICHARD WAGNER.

The Emperor: Yes, dear master, here is the finest of my orders. My only regret is that you were not with me in the French campaign; the war would have been a less bloody one, for you would have put the French to rout.

(Grætz, *Der Floh*, Vienna.)

Yet, Wagner did not feel comfortable with Rossini; he admired him, but he did not trust him as he did Auber. His article is favorable, on the whole, and tends to prove that Rossini was a richly gifted musician of merit, who was prevented by the public of his period and the circumstances surrounding him, from rising above his time, and, conse-

quently, from participating in the glory of the true heroes of the art. This little article, written immediately after the death of the author of *William Tell* and for the purpose of correcting certain anecdotes on his attitude towards Wagner, which were then making the rounds of the newspapers, is therefore posterior to *Art and Politics*, in which Wagner had expressed nearly the same idea, while violently attacking the poem of *William Tell*, parodied after Schiller, but adding that some of the music was so ravishing as to make one forget the subject.

Rossini, however, whom he declared to be the most voluptuously gifted of composers, engrossed his mind to the last It disturbed him not to be able to classify him; he would not call him simply good, still less mediocre, and as he could not put him on a line with the geniuses of German music, he was obliged to confess that he saw there a phenomenon very difficult to explain,—and he did not explain it.

THE KING OF BAVARIA AND RICHARD WAGNER.

King Ludwig: "Master, let us change, I am better here. Let me make music at Bayreuth, and *thou*, go and reign at Munich!"

(Grætz, *Der Floh*, Vienna.)

As to Gounod and his *Faust*, which he had attacked along with *William Tell* in the same writing, he never returned to the charge; one occasion had sufficed him to pass judgment,[1] not so much on the production as on the

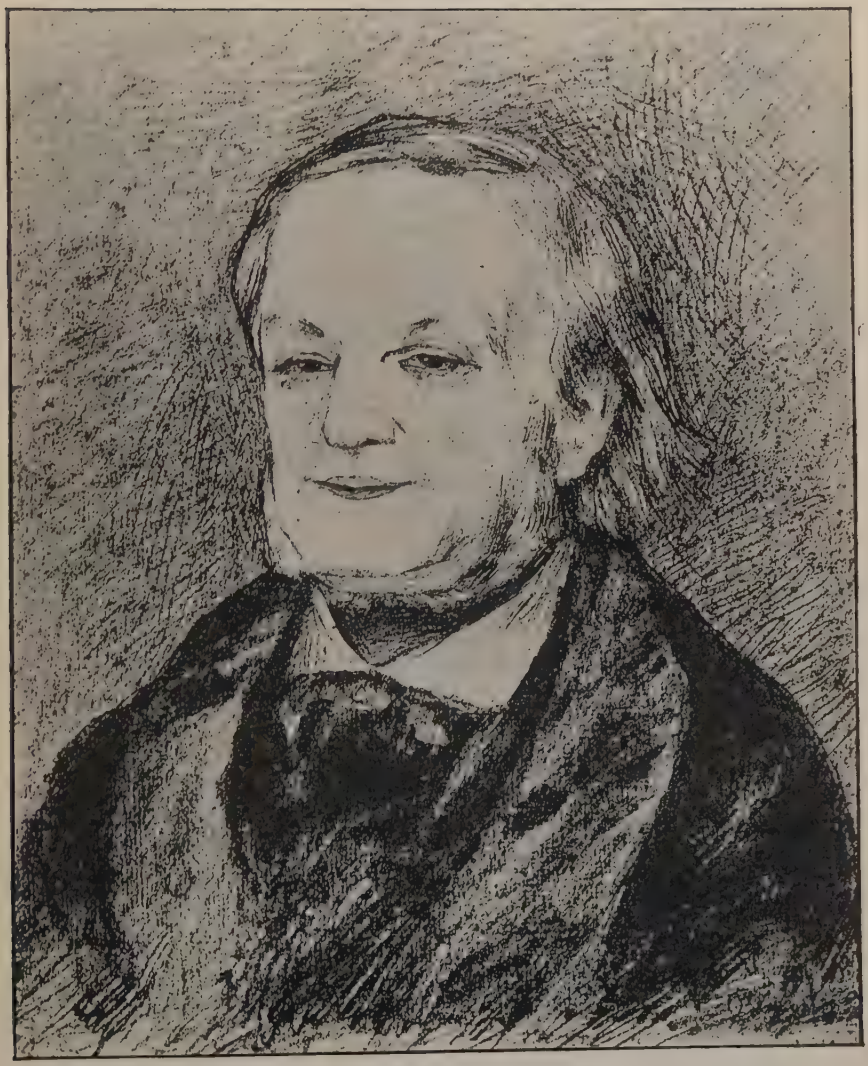
[1] This brief judgment suffices to explain the attacks, as vain as they were desperate, with which the author of *Faust* pursued Richard Wagner. The current opinion is that Wagner has qualified the music of Faust as "musique de lorette."

tendencies of an "inferior talent whose aim was success, and who, in his eagerness, took up with all kinds of means."

Who were his favorite composers, and what were the compositions of his choice? Beethoven with his quartets or his sonatas for intimate study, and his symphonies for public execution; Bach, with his *Well Tempered Clavichord;* Mozart with *The Magic Flute, Il Seraglio, Figaro* and *Don Juan;* Weber with *Euryanthe* and *Der Freischütz;* Mozart again, with his symphonies in E flat, G minor and C major. These were his daily friends, his boon companions. What he looked for first of all in a composition, he said, was homogeneity of style, equilibrium between the means and the end, and he found this absolute concordance between Mozart's music and his orchestra, between Palestrina's chorus and his counterpoint, between Chopin's piano and several of his preludes or studies, without passing judgment on "the ladies' Chopin," who savored too much of Parisian salons; happily he added that Chopin has produced many things superior to the level of the salons.

He regarded Schubert's melodies as true models; but that was no reason, he thought, for accepting his music as a whole and his sonatas for the piano, any more than Weber's marvellous operas should oblige us to admire his melodies, his flute trio and his piano quartet. The enthusiasm of Schumann for Schubert's trios was always a mystery to Wagner, as it was to Mendelssohn; "I recollect that Mendelssohn discovered everywhere in Schubert the image of the Vienna *bourgeois* and his easy life (Behaglichkeit)." "Strange," adds he, "that Liszt still loves to play Schubert, for this Hungarian *divertissement,* however it is executed, partakes of

This is a mistake; the triple description: "un salmigondis nauséabond, une platitude douceâtre, dans un jargon affecté de lorette," is aimed principally at the libretto fashioned by M. Jules Barbier from Goethe's masterpiece, and approved by M. Gounod



RICHARD WAGNER, IN 1882.

Crayon drawing by M. Renoir, from his oil sketch made in Palermo, Jan. 15, 1882.

(See page 393.)

triviality." This preference of Liszt's, however, is but natural, and what attracted him was the abundance of notes, and the virtuosity; his own compositions, in this respect, are not so different from certain of Schubert's pieces.

Mendelssohn, in Wagner's eyes, was a "landscapist of the first order" and the overture of *Fingal's Cave* seemed to him a masterpiece; he found in it marvellous imagination, a delicate sentiment, sustained by a consummate art; he was especially struck by the beauty of the passage where the oboes mount above the other instruments with a plaintive moaning like the winds of the sea rushing upon the waves. He admired equally *The Calm Sea* and *The Happy Return*, also the first movement and the scherzo of the *Scotch Symphony*. "One could not," thought he, "blame a composer for employing these national airs, when he developed them in such a marvellous fashion." On the other hand, he thought that the second themes and the andantes, where the human element appeared, were decidedly weak. As to the *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture, he said it was difficult to realize that the author had written this at the age of seventeen, so sure was the touch, and so finished the form.

It was in private that Wagner thus judged of the several composers just mentioned, and these conversations have been transmitted partly to us by Mr. Dannreuther, partly by Mr. Wolzogen in his interesting souvenirs. One day when they were discussing Berlioz, Wagner made an unexpected profession of faith. "In instrumental music," said he, "I am a *reactionist*, a *conservative*. I detest all that demands a verbal explanation over and above the sounds themselves. For instance, part of the touching love scene in Berlioz' *Romeo and Juliet* claims to reproduce in musical phrases the verses of Shakespeare relative to the lark and the nightingale in the balcony scene. But it is nothing like it, and it is not intelligible, so far as the music goes. Berlioz augmented, modified

WAGNER'S STUDY AT BAYREUTH.

(Not in the French edition.)

and spoiled his work; this so-called *Dramatic Symphony*, in its final form, is neither flesh nor fish; it has not the first elements of a symphony, properly speaking. No unity of subject, no unity of style, and the choral recitatives, the melodies and other vocal parts have altogether too little connection with the symphonic pieces. The opera finale, particularly on the part of Laurence, is quite a failure. Yet, there are some good things here and there. The funeral procession is very touching: it is a fine bit, and so is the Offertory in the *Requiem*. The first theme of the love scene is divine; the garden scene with the feast at Capulet's house is treated with extraordinary cleverness, for, to tell the truth, Berlioz was *diabolically clever*. I made a profound study of his instrumentation in 1840, at Paris, and since then I have often given attention to his scores. I have profited very much by them, in learning what he thought best to do, and what he thought best to avoid." This is frankly spoken, and Wagner did not belittle himself by proclaiming what profit he had derived from Berlioz' creations. It is idle to say that he did not appreciate him; here we have his formal acknowledgment.

In Schumann, Wagner recognized a delicate composer of inspired songs, of pretty piano pieces, a "*peintre de genre*," as Mendelssohn was a "*paysagiste*," and he developed his judgment as follows: "Schumann's fashion of treating the piano is insupportable to my ears; all is confusion, and his pieces cannot be rendered without abusing the pedal. What a consolation afterwards to listen to one of Beethoven's sonatas! In the beginning, I expected more from Schumann; his writings on music were brilliant, and his piano compositions showed great originality. There was a good deal of fermentation in them, but also a real feeling, and numerous passages are truly unique and perfect. I also estimate very highly a great number of his melodies, although they are not

so beautiful as Schubert's; he gave all his attention to the declamation, which was no small merit in his time."

This judgment is moderate enough, and Wagner had not forgotten that in the beginning of his career he had found a constant support in the *New Musical Gazette*, at least so long as Schumann was the director; but unfortunately he did not stop here. After the *Nibelungen* representations had gathered about the author all his fanatical admirers, his devotees, a sort of Masonic Society was formed, where free spirits refused to enter, and for which the lightest words falling from the master's lips had the weight of an oracle. At that time, exalted by the adoration of these disciples, intoxicated by the incense which they constantly burned under his nose, Wagner lost his head, and undertook to tear in pieces the very musicians whom he ought to have defended and respected.

So far as he cuffed the over-rated composers, French or others, so far as he had soundly rated the "trumpery" musicians, he had done well, and people only joined in the chorus; but lo and behold! one fine day he attacked Schumann, who should not have offended him deeply with one single opera; Schumann, indeed, whom the musical world recognized as the greatest symphonist musician after Beethoven. His offense was that he should have dared, he, a composer gifted for little songs and piano pieces, to write symphonies, ballads, poems, an opera, and to have thus misled the Germans who sought in these works the last word of contemporary national art — instead of going to seek it exclusively, as was proper, in the creations of Richard Wagner. But two or three articles were not too many to floor a man like this, and while drawing up one himself, Wagner was having another, not less crushing, written by one of his intimates.

This was the pianist Joseph Rubinstein, who had nothing more than a name in common with the celebrated brothers,

Anton and Nicolas Rubinstein, and who finished by killing himself after he was obliged to leave Bayreuth, where life was made a burden for the blindly devoted servant. This Joseph Rubinstein gave to the readers of the *Bayreuther Blätter*[1] a long article, *On the music of Schumann*, in which he attacked the author of *Manfred*, not as a poet and dramatic musician, — Wagner reserved this task for himself, — but as a composer from an absolute point of view. He accused him of not knowing how to build a composition, of proceeding always by *rosalies*, repeating certain members of phrases mounting by a tone or semitone; he then took the symphony in G flat, dissected the first movement, and demonstrated the utter emptiness of this composition. He treated the delicate piano pieces no better; on the contrary, he concluded with these words: "Even from a professional point of view Schumann is absolutely lacking in sincerity and truth, and it is to be hoped that numerous authors who take their inspiration from him will speedily detach themselves from this pernicious influence; otherwise there will be a total ruin of taste and sentiment."

Wagner himself did not attack Schumann from the front, and it was in a general article on the opera poem and on dramatic composition in particular that he made passing mention of him. In this article he spoke of many musicians, of Mozart, Weber, Winter, Spohr, etc., and finally of Rossini, whom he gave unreserved praise, and about whom he allowed

[1] This was the official organ of Wagnerism, a monthly journal started in January, 1878, for the propagation of the Wagnerian faith. It was edited by Walzogen, under the direction and inspiration of Wagner, who made many contributions to it, and persistently attacked in its columns the two disciples of Schumann, — Joachim and Johannes Brahms. He called the latter's symphonies pitiable imitations of Beethoven's, and once, in an article on the vivisection of dogs, which interested him deeply, he insinuated that at his funeral he should have only Brahm's *German Requiem* played. He had not this, indeed, but he had a magnificent wreath, which the author, forgetful of his attacks, had the good taste to send for the ceremonies at Bayreuth.

RICHARD WAGNER.
From a photograph from life taken in Vienna about 1875.
(Not in French edition.)

this singular sentiment to escape him: "People cried out a good deal (in Germany) against Rossini; but as a matter of fact it was less his poetry than his genius which hurt us. Fortunate that Rossinis are rare." Yes, and Schumanns also, with all due deference to Wagner. Here is how the author of *Tristan* judged the artist to whom we are indebted for *Paradise and Peri:*

". . . My successes at the royal theatre of Dresden were not long in attracting to me first Ferdinand Hiller, afterwards Robert Schumann; they came to find out how, on one of the most important lyric stages of Germany, a German composer, hitherto unknown, could find lasting favor with the public. The two friends at first thought they perceived that I offered nothing unusual in the musical line, and that, therefore, my success found its only excuse in the bare text of my operas. Indeed, my own opinion was that it was of the first importance to have a good poem, and I opened my mind to them, who were in quest of opera subjects. They asked my advice, and when I gave it they refused to follow it; I suspect that they feared bad faith on my part. Apropos of my poem of *Lohengrin*, Schumann declared that he could not see in it a subject for an opera; in which opinion he differed with the capellmeister Taubert of Berlin, who, later on, after the completion and execution of the work, said that he longed to take the text and try his hand at setting it to music. When Schumann composed the poem of his *Geneviève*, I had my labor for my pains in trying to get him to modify his third act, which is unfortunately nonsensical; but he had his own way, feeling in his heart that my counsels were meant to do nothing less than ruin his best effects. He had but one aim; that everything in his work should be *German, chaste and pure*, relieved however by occasional bits of levity; and it was thus that he came to write the vulgarities of his second finale. A few years ago,

at Leipsic, I was present at a very finished representation of this *Geneviève*, and I must confess that the third act of Auber's *Bal masque*, a work repugnant in the last degree and built with *motifs* of the same stamp, seemed to me a masterpiece of delicacy compared with the truly sickening brutality of this *German, chaste and pure* poet and composer. It is strange, but I have never heard one single complaint on this subject, so religiously does the German conceal his true sentiment, when it is a question of raising one man above another, for instance Schumann above myself."

Was all this talk serious? It would be so sad a thing to believe, that I am inclined to doubt it. And in another paragraph Wagner betrayed himself a little, and seemed to imply that he wrote all this for the gallery. "... It is possible," said he, "that the ideas herein developed may be more or less just, but this article is not intended for the *Gazette de Cologne* nor any other paper of importance, so that, suppose it is bad, the matter rests between ourselves." Granted; but, though the *Bayreuther Blätter* had not indeed the importance of the *Gazette de Cologne*, as Wagner laughingly called it, was it necessary to put such sentiments in print, and could he not have gratified these coterie prejudices in a manner more discreet?

The most striking thing about Richard Wagner at first sight, was the extraordinary life and energy which animated this insignificant body, surmounted by a very large head, with an enormous frontal development. His caricaturists, especially those in England, have made the most of this disproportion, which made the man look smaller than he really was. His bright eyes and pleasant glance softened the strongly marked face, and his mouth, notwithstanding the undue prominence of nose and chin, had a singular expression of sweetness and affability. With his short stature, his extreme rapidity of movement, gait and gesture, he gave from the first

an impression of unusual and powerful originality; he fascinated by his conversation, so animated was he on all subjects which interested him, and he always acted out his discourse. He was violent, even explosive in temper; with him, gaiety like wrath was tempestuous and overflowing. Was he seized with a fit of mirth or raillery, he lost all control; he no longer knew what he was saying, or to whom he was talking, and his wife, whose diplomacy was ever on the watch to prevent or repair his blunders, was often unable to hold him back, or to keep up with him on this slippery ground; he was unmistakably incorrigible.

Wherever he was he eclipsed all about him, and his melodious voice added still more to the musical effect of his discourse; in short, his native irresistible energy, his irrepressibility, his gift of incessant production, went hand in hand with a simple kindness of heart, an extreme sensibility. And Mr. Dannreuther, who knew him intimately, adds not without a shadow of regret: "The noble and good man whom his friends loved, and the aggressive critic or reformer who addressed himself to the public, were two very distinct individuals in Richard Wagner. Towards the public, and the world of singers, actors and musicians, he had habitually an attitude of defiance; with them he was always on the point of exasperation; impatient, nervous, irritable, he seemed to take pleasure in picking men and things to pieces." Alas! yes, that was the disagreeable side of his nature.

And yet what a fascinating influence he exerted over so many artists devoted to his cause! How he subjugated them, how he fanaticized them by a superior charm, perhaps by his very violence, and without troubling himself about the jealousies which he might provoke among them! At the reception which followed the *Parsifal* representations, he lavished the most flattering praise and counsel upon his favorite singer, Mme. Materna, while by humiliating contrast Mlle.

Brandt, who had devoted herself body and soul to his cause and who had made an incomparable Kundry, was left in the shade, alone with Mme. Wagner, who forced her, by many kind attentions, to forget her rival's supreme triumph with the master. And the heroic artist, in her fanaticism, would have gladly served him the next year, if Wagner, before his death, had not struck her name from the list of interpreters worthy to participate in the festivals of 1883!

He made but a sign, and nearly two hundred of the best artists of Germany and foreign lands hastened to the rehearsals and performances of the Trilogy, which lasted through two summers; proud to be associated with his work, they cheerfully signed the engagement to spend at Bayreuth three whole months of these two years, without making anything more than their board and travelling expenses. Finally, did he not impose upon the most celebrated singers the strict obligation not to respond to any recall, no matter how much they were applauded, in order to "keep better within the compass of the work which they were to present to the public"? And all submitted without complaint to this iron rule, patiently waiting till it should please Wagner to unmask them, then appearing all together, grouped in costume about the master, not for themselves nor for the public, but in order to give to the author "a last comprehensive view of his work." Is it not remarkable, and can another case be cited where a man has exercised so great a control over subjects so difficult to govern?

WAGNER

Reading on the Heavenly Shores the Munich papers which inform him of the death of King Ludwig II.

— May I not be the real murderer of the poor prince?

(*The Triboulet*, June 27, 1886.)

All who approached Richard Wagner were charmed, car-

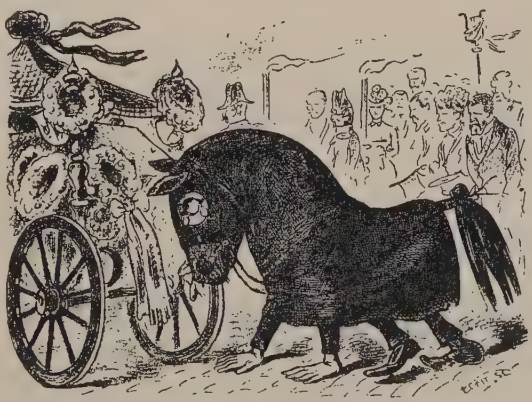
ried away, dominated by his personality, those who knew him intimately as well as those who had only a passing acquaintance; but all testify likewise to the uncertainty of his temper and the necessity of bending before him. For example, what says Mme. Judith Gautier, who had a sort of religious admiration for him? "It must be admitted that there is in Richard Wagner's character an element of violence and roughness which is the cause of his being often misunderstood, but only by those who judge from exteriors alone. Nervous and impressionable to excess, his sentiments and emotions are always pushed to their paroxysm; a slight pain is with him almost a despair, the least irritation has the appearance of a frenzy. This marvellous organization of so exquisite a sensibility, experiences some terrible vibrations; one even questions how he is able to stand them; one day of sorrow makes him ten years older, but let joy return, and he is younger than ever the next day. He spends his energies with an extraordinary prodigality. Always sincere, giving himself up entirely to all things, but of a very changeable disposition; his opinions, his ideas, absolute at the first moment, have nothing irrevocable about them; nobody is quicker than he to recognize an error, but the first fire must be allowed to burn itself out. By the frankness and the vehemence of his speech, it often happens that he unintentionally wounds his best friends; excessive always, he goes too far without realizing the sorrow that he may cause. Many people, wounded in their self-love, have silently carried away their hurt, which rankled in their breasts, and they lost thus a precious friendship; whereas if they had said that they were wounded, they would have seen such sincere regret on the master's part, such warm and earnest efforts to console them, that their love for him would have been increased."

Now listen to M. Monod, much less intimate at Bayreuth. "It is there that one should see and know Wagner, since he

puts a curb upon his indomitable nature, in order to receive with a perfect courtesy the numerous visitors whom the festivals attract to Bayreuth. He exercises an irresistible influence upon those who come near him, not only by his musical genius, the originality of his wit, his varied stock of learning, but above all by a power of temperament and will which shines through all his being. One feels in the presence of one of nature's forces which breaks loose and vents its fury with a violence almost irresponsible. When one takes a closer view of him, sometimes of an unbridled gaiety, sending forth a perfect torrent of pleasantries and hearty laughs, sometimes furious, respecting in his attacks neither titles nor powers, nor friendships, always obedient to the irresistible outburst of the first emotion, one ends by not being too severe with him for the lack of taste, of tact and of delicacy of which

DESTINY OF RICHARD WAGNER HERE BELOW.

Criticism pursued him like a fury as long as he lived.



Now it follows his coffin and plays the role of the horse draped in mourning.

(*Kikeriki*, Vienna, Feb. 22, 1883.)

he was repeatedly guilty. One is tempted, if a Jew, to pardon his pamphlet on Judaism in music; if French, his buffoonery on the capitulation of Paris; if German, all the injuries which he has heaped upon Germany; just as one pardons Voltaire for *la Pucelle* and certain letters to Frederick II., Shakespeare for certain pleasantries and certain sonnets, Goethe for certain ridiculous productions, and Victor Hugo for certain expressions of sentiment. One takes him for just what he is, full of faults, perhaps because he is full of genius, but an incontestably superior man, one of the greatest and most extraordinary which our century has produced."[1] It would be impossible to say more in fewer words.

All testimonies agree that Wagner in his social relations was a very affable and charming man, even with the French. The painter Renoir, travelling one winter in Italy during the master's sojourn there, determined to try and commit him to a sitting, though with very little hope of success, knowing well Wagner's repugnance to posing for artists. He had provided himself with a letter of introduction, which he had lost *en route*. Not discouraged, however, he presented himself at Wagner's house, and the first person to receive him there was the Russian painter Paul Joukowski, who had attached himself to the master's fortunes, and who was then engaged in making models of the *Parsifal* scenery.[2] When Renoir announced to him the object of his visit, he declared that he had been following Wagner about for two years, trying to get a portrait of him; "But wait," said he, "what he

[1] M. G. Monod's articles on the Trilogy at Bayreuth in 1876, published in the *Moniteur universel*.

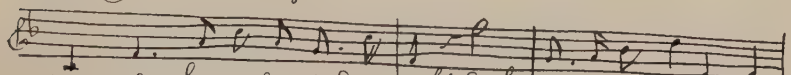
[2] This young painter — writes Mme. Judith Gautier — who, meeting Richard Wagner at Naples, begged and obtained the honor of being chosen to make the Parsifal *scenery* and left all to follow the master, is the son of one of the most illustrious poets of Russia, who was the tutor of Alexander II. The artist established himself in a house near Wahnfried and lived there like a hermit, working with his whole heart.

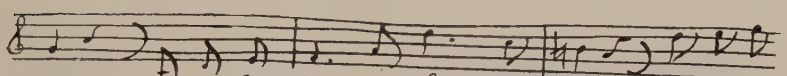
Seinem freundlichen Wirth

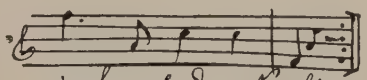
Herrn

Louis Kraft.

Mit dankbarer Lebhaftigkeit.


1. Der Worte viele sind gemacht, doch selten wird die That voll.
2. In meinem lieben Vaterstadt, was hab' ich dort von Magis-
3. Von ihm der mich so schön empfing, fortan mein nimmend Lied er-


trachts. was ein Hôtel zum E- den schafft, das sind nicht
trat. Der mir hier Wohn und Wonne schafft, das ist der
kling: des Königthums, der Künstler schafft ein neuer



Hôtel de Prusse Leipzig 22 April 1871.

Richard Wagner

A HUMOROUS COMPOSITION ADDRESSED TO LOUIS KRAFT,
the host of Hotel de Prusse in Leipsic.

refuses me, he may grant you ; and at any rate you must not go away without seeing him."

Renoir remained and did well. . . . But let him speak for himself; the following is a true picture of Wagner, as given in a letter to a friend; "I hear a sound of muffled footsteps on the thick carpet. It is the master in garb of velvet, his great sleeves lined with black satin. He is very fine, and very amiable. He shakes my hand, bids me be seated, and then commences the wildest kind of a conversation, interspersed with *ahs* and *ohs*, half French, half German, with gutteral terminations. 'I am much pleased (ah! oh! and a gutteral sound). You come from Paris?' 'No, I come from Naples,' and then I tell him of the loss of my letter, at which he laughs a good deal. We talk about everything. When I say *we*, I mean that I had nothing to say but 'Dear master, certainly, dear master.' At last I rise to take my leave. Then he takes both my hands and pushes me back into my chair: 'Wait a little longer; my wife is coming. . . .'"

In short, Wagner, carried away by the gaiety of the Parisian artist, offered to pose *one half hour* the following day before breakfast, for the Russian and the French painter, at the same time: "You will make me," said he to the first, "turning my back to France, and Monsieur Renoir will make me from the other side. (Ah! oh!)" ". . . The next day," continues Renoir, "I was there at midday; you know the rest. He was very gay, I very nervous, and regretting that I was not Ingres. I believe I made the most of my time, twenty-five minutes; it was not very much. But I think if I had stopped sooner I would have done better; for towards the last my model lost a little of his gaiety and became stiff. I followed these changes too much. When finished, Wagner wanted to see the result. He said: 'Ah! ah! I look like a protestant priest.' This was quite true. But I was only too happy not to have made a complete failure of it; I had at least a little souvenir of this admirable head."

This oil portrait, sketched at Palermo in half an hour by the French artist Renoir, on Jan. 15, 1882, two days after Wagner had finished *Parsifal*, is one of the rare ones for which the master consented to pose. ". . . He repeated several times that the French were too much given to reading (ah! oh! and a hearty laugh) the German Jew art critics (and he named one of them). 'But Monsieur Renoir, I know that there are some good fellows in France, whom I do not confound with the German Jews.' Unfortunately I cannot give an adequate idea of the whole-souled gaiety on the part of the master."

How different is the bugbear which hostile legend has given us, from the living man, seen in the flesh! Yet why is it surprising? True geniuses are as simple in their intimacies as false geniuses are the reverse. The latter never forget the role they are enacting, nor leave off posing, some for the deep thinker, some for the exalted mystic. These are great comedians, if not great musicians.

AT THE GATE OF HEAVEN.

Wagner asking St. Peter to open to him the gates of Paradise.
(*Der junge Kikeriki*, Feb. 18, 1883.)

CHAPTER XV

THE GENIUS JUDGED BY HIS PARTISANS AND DETRACTORS.

HOW was Richard Wagner to be regarded after death, and what will probably be his place in the golden book of posterity? Simply that of a musician of the first rank and an inspired reformer. His lot will be that of all the geniuses who preceded him, and from whom he openly drew inspiration before the maturity of his powerful personality. In the earlier days when a master was great enough to excite hostility, his partisans almost deified him; they incarnated in him the whole musical art, and they admitted nothing before, nothing after him; it was like the god of music descending for one day upon the earth, illuminating the world, and leaving nothing but darkness behind him. But these excesses of thought and of style, bursting forth in the heat of the contest, and provoked by the contradictions of the opposite party, moderated as the genius thus defended encountered fewer detractors and compelled the lasting admiration of all reflective minds.

Such was the case with Richard Wagner. When his musical genius was almost universally recognized, the latest school of Wagnerites appeared, unhealthy and distorted minds who thought, in order to distinguish themselves from the first proselytes, to relegate the musician to the second place and to exalt in Wagner the philosopher and the poet, to make of him a sort of universal mystagogue. Literary games

meant to blind the eyes of simple-hearted readers, wagers of young people in sportive mood, mere jingle of words which signify nothing and which entertain those only, so it pleases me to think, who originate them. Wagner is in all, all is in Wagner; such is the neo-pantheistic formula given by these remarkable discourses, a little confusing at the first glance — these facetious pretenders having wished thus to exasperate the rank and file; but one can easily discern the bottom of this shallow pool of verbiage, in spite of the tangle of undergrowth piled up to hide the snare set for the simpletons.

The quality of thinker which people contrive to discover in Wagner, that of philosopher and politician, which he believed himself to be, so much will be carried away by the winds; of the poet, there will remain just so much as is inseparable from the musician, such a reform as he has conceived and realized not being possible except by a great composer who was at the same time a talented and clear-minded man of letters. As to the musician, on which the backward detractors and the too forward partisans have spent themselves in puerile productions, that is another matter, and one may affirm without boasting the gift of prophecy, that his entire work will traverse the centuries, to the limit that is granted to a musical work, and will render the name of Richard Wagner immortal. It is the common destiny, in France, of composers who innovate or reform, to be combatted by their fellow artists and defended by men of letters. Was it not the same way with Lulli, and with Gluck, and was it not the pure litterateurs, unmusical but open to ideas of progress, who sounded the trumpet to defend and sustain the innovator against the musicians?

The women, also, took part in the struggle with their habitual ardor, and just as in the last century one saw the queen and the countess of Provence make a cabal, as they called it then, for *Iphigenia in Aulis*, so one saw another

foreign princess, another beautiful dame of the imperial court, desperately beat her hands for *Tannhäuser*, and break her fan from spite, braving a hostile and furious audience. "The latest bore, but a colossal one," wrote at the time that eternal joker Mérimée, "has been *Tannhäuser*. Some say that the representation at Paris was one of the secret conventions of the Villafranca treaty; others that they have sent us Wagner to force us to admire Berlioz. It seems to me that I could write music like that myself, taking inspiration from my cat walking over the key-board of the piano. The performance was very curious. The princess von Metternich made a terrible stir in trying to appear to understand it and in starting applause which did not come. Everybody yawned; but, at first, everybody wished to have the air of understanding this nameless enigma. . . . In short, the fiasco is enormous; Auber says it is 'some Berlioz without melody.'"

At least, such a desperate battle, sustained on both sides with an unimaginable fury, had some grandeur about it; people attacked each other from the front, and gave each other some fearful blows as they cried genius or monster. That was the heroic period for Wagner and his adherents, whereas the insidious attacks of his later enemies and the glorifications managed by his modern zealots are stamped with a singular paltriness. Happily the genius of the master is great enough to resist the influence of both parties, and will not be judged from the standpoint of his ancient adversaries or of his devotees of the new observance. To-day, Wagner is saluted as a composer of genius, and the very musicians who fought desperately against him, cannot keep from imitating him, when occasion offers, and following in his wake. The heroic and legendary era has then closed; the master is henceforth entered into history, and immortality.

That unfortunate failure of *Tannhäuser* at Paris, to which we must always return, remained as a black spot in Wagner's

memory, so powerful is the fascination which our capital has always exercised over foreign musicians. Sometimes he affected to be indifferent, insisting that he felt not the slightest resentment towards the French public; sometimes he rejoiced over it as an act of Providence which had rescued his independence as an artist; but when he ceased to speak for the gallery, and was no longer concerned in making friends in Paris, he allowed to be perceived in his writings a bitter regret, a lingering ill-will. And it was quite natural. Towards the end of his life he wrote to one of his partisans that he did not want to die until he had taken his son to Paris and showed him the spot where *Tannhäuser* had been hissed. His friends, however, had overcome impossibilities in order to console him, and from the very first, some sound minds, some highly gifted writers had protested against this summary judgment with a generous indignation.

"The success or the failure of *Tannhäuser* can prove absolutely nothing, nor even determine in the slightest degree the chances favorable or unfavorable, in the future. *Tannhäuser* might have been a detestable work and *mounted to the skies*. It might have been perfect and repelled everybody. The question involved, that of the reformation of the opera, is not an empty one, and the battle will continue; if stopped it will begin again. I heard it said recently that if Wagner obtained a brilliant success with his drama, it would be a mere individual accident, and that his method would have no lasting effect on the destinies and the transformations of the lyric drama. I believe myself qualified by a study of the past, that is to say the eternal, to conclude on the other hand that a complete failure does not in any way destroy the possibility of new attempts in the same direction, and to predict that in the near future one may see not only new authors, but those accredited in the past, profit in some measure by the ideas set forth by Wagner, and pass happily through the breach made by him.

In what history has one ever read that great causes have been lost in a single contest?"

Who is speaking this fine language; and who then was able to read the future so clearly, on the next day after the defeat? A man assuredly little versed in musical matters, but to whom a high intelligence had revealed the eternal laws of all art work, and whose satirical pen has put them on paper with an eloquent ardor. Nor has any one depicted better than Baudelaire the excitement which fills some minds on listening to Wagner's works for the first time, and that sort of moral invasion which makes some amateurs, when they have once mastered his music, unwilling to listen to any other.

"No musician has excelled, as Wagner has done, in representing space and depth, both material and spiritual. This is a remark which many minds, and some better than mine, have felt impelled to make on several occasions. He possesses the art of interpreting, by subtle gradations, all that is excessive, immense, ambitious, in the natural and spiritual man. It seems sometimes, when listening to this ardent and despotic music, as if one recognizes through the darkness, rent by revery, the dizzy conceptions of opium. From that moment, that is to say from the first concert,[1] I was possessed with a desire to enter into a better understanding of these singular works. I had gone through (at least so it appeared to me) a spiritual operation, a revelation. My pleasurable sensations had been so great that I could not help longing for a constant repetition of them. In what I had heard there undoubtedly entered a great deal that Weber and Beethoven had already made known to me, but there was also something new which I was powerless to define, and this powerlessness

[1] The first concert given by Richard Wagner at the Theatre Italien of Paris was on Jan. 15, 1860. This article appeared in the *Revue européenne*, on April 1st, 1861, immediately after the break-down of *Tannhäuser*.

caused in me a mingled feeling of impatience and curiosity. For many days, for a long time, I said to myself: 'Where could I hear some of Wagner's music to-night?' Those of my friends who possessed a piano were more than once my martyrs. Very soon, as he was quite a novelty, some of his symphonic pieces began to be played in the open casinos to an idle throng of trivial voluptuaries. The fulgurating majesty of this music fell there like thunder in a wicked place. The report spread quickly, and we often presented the comic spectacle of grave and refined men submitting to the contact of an unwholesome crowd in order to enjoy the solemn march of the *Invitation to the Wartburg* or the majestic wedding march of *Lohengrin*."

"Where could I hear some of Wagner's music?" What a heart-felt cry, and how often it was uttered in the first days of the Wagnerian revelation in France! But what is the origin of it, and what is the reason of this sovereign power, this fascinating attraction which Wagner's music exercises over all those who do not oppose to it a prejudiced resistance? It comes surely from the manner in which he has conceived his entire art work, for it is not alone a musical charm which enchants one, and the felicity with which he has blended all the emotional elements in one homogeneous whole, giving to each an equal part to play nor allowing any one of them to predominate to the detriment of the others. It must also be held that Richard Wagner, preoccupied above all with interpreting and expressing the sentiments and motives of the soul, with depicting less the exterior events than the passions which have provoked them or the conflicts which result from them in the souls of his heroes, penetrates at the same time the innermost depths of the hearts of his auditors.

His proscription of history in favor of myth was tantamount to saying that in all scenic action, in all drama in the original sense of the word, he sought only a very simple sub-

ject, and one simply treated, devoid especially of the dramatic combinations and vicissitudes in favor in the ordinary opera. Now he found this in the heroic history of past centuries as well as in pure legend, inasmuch as many of his poems are based on history,—a history that is rudimentary, it is true, but no longer mere legend. That he may have formulated his preferences in a manner too exclusive and too absolute, seems pretty clear, but it is no less clear that the reasons for his choice were judiciously deduced; only extend what he calls myth to embryonic history,—as he instinctively did when passing from theory to practice,—and you must recognize that he was entirely right. He was right in following his artistic nature and his musical temperament, when he resolved to adopt subjects appertaining to the legend (and to history in process of formation, he might have added), because, as he says, the emotional elements of a mythical tale are always simple and can be easily detached from all accessory detail; because it is only in the heart of history and in its essential pathos that the musician will find his best inspirations.

AT BAYREUTH.

Richard Wagner to Kikeriki: You see, my dear friend, there are some people here who are applauding.

Kikeriki—You are mistaken, great master, they are only clasping their hands above their heads.

(*Kikeriki*, Vienna, Aug. 3, 1882.)

This observation testified at once to a clear reading of his own heart and an exact understanding of the public, more accessible to simple emotions and sentiments than to the refinements and complexities of passion. But it was not all to have done this; it was necessary to make the most of it, and it was to this end that Wagner's proceedings tended in the first conception and in the final execution of his works when he joined together different arts, — music, poetry or mimetics, preserving always an equal balance between them. "I recognized," he urgently repeats, "that at the exact point at which one of these arts attained its insuperable limits, the other's sphere of action commenced with the most rigorous precision; that, consequently, by the intimate union of these two arts, one could express with the most satisfying clearness what could not be expressed by one of them alone; that, on the contrary, all attempt to render by means of one of them what could only be rendered by the two together, must inevitably end in obscurity and confusion at first, afterwards in the degeneracy and corruption of each particular art." This is all very good in theory, but how was it to turn out in practice? For no brain is so vast and so richly organized as to be able to bring forth at once so complex a work. He was obliged then to follow a method, and in the preparatory labor at least, it was necessary for him to divide what would finally appear the result of a single effort of will.

When Wagner had fixed his choice upon a subject, the first task, and not the easiest in his eyes, was to condense into one very concise plan the scattered threads of the myth which he had resolved upon, and to weave them, as it were, anew. One can get some idea of this formidable preliminary task by thinking of how many sources he had to visit for his materials, before blending and welding them together into one homogeneous whole. When he had finished with these picturesque or literary researches, and when the personages

stood out clearly before his eyes, he started upon his rough sketch; here commenced the real work of the dramatic author. In giving body to the acts and scenes, he did not for a single instant lose sight of the theatre, and the performance was taking place, so to speak, in his mind.

First of all, he desired that the dialogue, in each scene, should lay bare the interior motives which guided the personages, and that from one scene to another, the course of the drama should appear to be the direct result of these sentiments, in order to halt, at the end of each act, at some decisive event, some culminating point of the story. The piece once outlined, and the principal dialogue passages fixed, Wagner set to work to put his poem into verse, seeking especially the rhythmic accentuation, and forcing himself to conceive at the same time the line and the musical sound. When his poem had thus taken form, he undertook the music, or rather he commenced to *write* it, for, in him, the poet and the musician were one; the musical conception went hand in hand with the poetic conception, and sometimes even preceded it.

From the first period of incubation of his work, when he had only caught glimpses of his characters and situations, there were presented to his mind certain motives — *Leitmotifs*, as he designated them later — which determined for him the dominant emotions or the characteristic traits of his personages.[1] These motives, and others of the same origin,

[1] These considerations on the birth of Wagner's operas, summed up here from Mr. Dannreuther's work in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, are all the more interesting since they must come from Wagner himself. Mr. Dannreuther would seem to go a little far when he affirms that Wagner would allow no narrations in his operas, and claims that all the important facts are unfolded upon the stage, — there is hardly one of his works, on the contrary, where the recitatives do not hold a very considerable place; — but he is more in the right when he sums up in few words the different styles in which Wagner successively treated the vocal parts. At the outset, in *Rienzi*, he aimed only for simple melodies in which the singer could

become the subjects, or more properly speaking, the themes, which the dramatic symphonist employed while making use of all the orchestral resources of Beethoven, but adding thereto all that the course of the dramatic action could suggest to him. The tableaux and the events which are unfolded on the stage thus become visions explained by the symphonic music; the orchestra prepares and starts the action, supports the details, recalls past events and becomes, in a manner, the artistic conscience of the entire work.

EXCLAMATION FROM ONE OF RICHARD WAGNER'S FANATICS.

" Blissful master, the bassoons are with thee ! "

(*Kikeriki*, Vienna, Aug. 6, 1882.)

There is little enough point to this motto in the German, and that little disappears in process of translation.

Assuredly, it would be ill-timed to demand of all the musicians who write for the theatre a preparatory labor of this kind, an equal amount of diversified knowledge, in a word, an identical method of conceiving and executing,

easily produce an effect; then in the *Flying Dutchman* and still more in *Tannhäuser*, the ebb and flow of melody is ruled by the dramatic action; in *Lohengrin*, the emotions attract quite as much attention as the peculiarities of melody, whereas a characteristic harmony and instrumentation accents the melodic outline; finally, in his latest works, the vocal melody springs directly from the words; it is often independent of the orchestra, and in some cases it is actually nothing more than an intensified version of the spoken sounds of the German language.

and Richard Wagner would have been the first to disapprove of such demands. It is absurd to declare that the author of *Tristan* has corrupted all the composers of his time who have not reacted against his influence, and those who go about crusading against this "musical heresiarch" know very well that neither they nor anybody else can arrest the movement which forces an art in the open wake left by an innovator of genius; like the village charlatans, they make an outcry only that they may hold the loungers a little longer about their platform. It is one of the general laws of the universe that an exceptional genius attracts to himself, by his radiance alone, all the contemporary artists; but it is not in his power to guide in such or such direction the genial influence which Heaven has bestowed upon him, or to decide whether it shall be beneficial or injurious to those who come under it; it is for them to know how to draw profit from it, and to give themselves up to the current without being drowned in it.

In the realm of dramatic music, it was the same way with Gluck at the end of the eighteenth century, with Rossini at the beginning of the nineteenth, and if the influence exerted by Wagner seems more striking, it is because it embraces a larger field, comprising at the same time the conception of the drama, the elaboration of the poem, the manipulation of the orchestra, while the influence of Gluck made itself felt on the declamation alone and that of Rossini on the pure production of melody. It must be added, in order to complete the comparison, that Gluck and Rossini did not aim to exercise any ascendency whatever over the musicians who lived in their times or those who would come after them; the influence of their genius was quite spontaneous and unpremeditated, even taking into account the dedicatory epistle of *Alceste*.

Wagner, on the contrary, aspiring to the role of innova-

tor and leader of a school, reasoned inductively, and embodied his ideas in a doctrine, in order to assure to his work an empire more lasting, and more wide-spreading. Doubt you that he has succeeded? The music or the school which some stupid people still amuse themselves by calling "music or school of the future," is notably the music of the present, for multitudes of facts demonstrate that the destinies of modern opera are closely bound to it. There is no longer, to-day, a single composer worthy the name, who does not aim to make use of Richard Wagner's creations, just as Gluck's successors,

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO CELEBRATED COMPOSERS.

Mozart played *alone* and without accepting remuneration; he was applauded by hundreds of people.

Richard Wagner employs hundreds of singers and musicians; thousands of people pay for seats, and he *alone* does the applauding.

(*Kikeriki*, Vienna, Aug. 6, 1882.)

led by Salieri, have appropriated the innovations of that superior genius.

But it is their business to profit by these acquisitions in proportion to their means, and, if possible, to keep their individuality distinct and free, while drawing from the music and the methods of the master only that which will suit their particular natures. This task is a difficult one however, and one which demands, besides personal inspiration, a great deal of judgment and artistic sense. If one or the other of these

qualities be lacking, the result will be either a servile, unintelligent imitation, or an obstinate, unintelligible negation. And, moreover, if it were necessary to forewarn composers against the pernicious propensity of servilely imitating Richard Wagner in order to arrive more quickly at the realization of similar works, no one would be better qualified than he to point out the dangers of such a course and its inanity, for no one was a better judge, or had reflected more upon himself and his art.

"Every time that a composer of instrumental music abandons tonality," said he, "he is lost." For examples he took certain strange and tortured modulations in *Lohengrin* and *Tristan*, which passed because of the power of the dramatic situation, whereas they would have sadly clashed in a purely instrumental composition: "Let the occasion present itself," added he, "and I can risk depicting violent, terrible things, because the action renders them comprehensible; but let music, separated from the drama, attempt such audacities, and immediately it will appear grotesque, barbarous. Indeed, I fear that my scores are of scarcely any use to composers of instrumental music. They admit of no condensation; still less of dilation; they are likely to mislead, and therefore the wisest thing is to leave them alone. I would earnestly say to young men who wish to write for the theatre: So long as you are young, abstain from the drama, and write only operettas (Singspiele)." For those composers who are inclined to imitate Richard Wagner, here are counsels more judicious and profitable than any number of mystic declamations with anathemas against the demon of Bayreuth, accompanied by sanctimonious genuflections before the god Mozart.

Moreover, the composers all over the world, even the most advanced in their career and the most glorious, are conscious to-day of the superiority of such a genius, and, with sincerity or not, proclaim it. He is no longer misunderstood

and combatted save by those whose artistic sense is surpassed by self-love or desire for gain, and who try to put off the final triumph of genius, in order to prolong by so much the sale of their adulterated productions which these superior creations would justly send back into obscurity. And in the same way the critics, everywhere but in France, have all made an apology to the great composer, too long misunderstood. Richard Wagner died just at the time when the only musical writer of Germany who still held out against him, — the most important one it is true, Edward Hanslick, — had just rendered him homage in confessing his genius, in recognizing that throughout the musical world, in Italy, in France, in Germany, only Richard Wagner remained.

It was apropos of the *Tribut de Zamora* whose failure in Vienna had been exemplary, that this writer asked: "To whom shall we appeal henceforth for opera, for there is no longer, even in France, the materials to furnish a repertoire. With Bizet has disappeared prematurely the new talent which gave the most promise; Massenet's music lacks youth, and the two pontifs well known to Parisian art, Ambroise Thomas and Gounod, have grown very old. Ah! old age is a sad thing when pride continues to cherish the fever of production without succeeding in imparting to the creative fancy the flame which formerly warmed it, but which is henceforth extinct! 'It is not necessary that I should show myself as an old *danseuse*,' said Rossini; 'they would not have me dance any more.' Rossini gave himself an easy old age, a lazy one, if you will; but how gratifying it must have been to him to hear people say: 'What a pity that he will not write any more!' Whereas his two Parisian confreres have subjected themselves to-day to hearing people murmur under their breath: 'What a pity that they will not stop writing!' Some one else had already said all this, even in France, before Mr. Hanslick, but it was good that the latter should write it in

his turn; truth is of no country, and it is never too late to proclaim it.

Richard Wagner is dead, and his French detractors are not disarmed. It would have been a great mistake to expect that they would be. A large amount of innocence would be required to believe that people who had laid siege since the representation of *Tannhäuser* at Paris, and who had for twenty years gratuitously injured themselves in the complete negation of Richard Wagner's masterpieces, were only waiting for him to die in order to turn completely round and bow down before his genius, while confessing their error in the face of the whole world. A certain amount of courage, or at least a certain amount of good faith was necessary to act in this way, and what appeared perfectly simple to Mr. Hanslick, the discriminating critic of Vienna, would have seemed signal weakness to the French journalists, who never retracted, though they might go to any length of absurdity, — which they did.

So long as Wagner was living, they were able to cover their obstinacy with a semblance of patriotism; they went about posing as guardians of justice, affirming that they condemned only the man and reserved their judgment on the composer until the day when his death, calming their susceptibilities, should leave them free to lend an ear to his music. They said this, and some people believed them; but these scruples had been a little long in coming to them. They had not hesitated, from the outset, to pronounce the rashest judgment not only on *Tannhäuser*, but on the entire work of the composer, which they covered, though entirely ignorant of it, with mockery and abuse. It was only after some years had passed, when they saw people applaud him, and felt themselves more and more isolated in their obstinate opposition, that they thought up this subtle distinction between the man and the composer, that they desired to arrest

this irresistible movement, by summoning the police to their aid in the name of outraged patriotism.

Wagner had laid himself open to attack, it is true, and these scruples, though exaggerated, would have been only respectable, if they had been sincere; but what indication that they were? By this great display of fine sentiments, these foundered Aristarchs sought only to delay for a time their irremediable defeat; they themselves have proved it by injuring, by outraging, worse than ever, after his death, the man and the artist to whom they had promised justice and reparation when he should have had the good taste to die. It was only a pretence, and his death concerned them very little. The only thing which did preoccupy them, and which preoccupies them still, is their own influence, which they believed great, and which is found to be empty and without weight.

Shall it be said that the time may have already arrived for playing at Paris some complete opera by Wagner, say *Lohengrin?* Certainly the number of amateurs who admire Wagner's works, or who are disposed to listen to them attentively, is steadily increasing; but one persistent hisser is sufficient to spoil the pleasure, or distract the attention of two or three thousand auditors. And what matters it, after all, whether *Lohengrin* is or is not played in Paris? How could such a performance augment the fame of a composer whose operas are admired and applauded everywhere but in France, and who, by the avowal of an enemy of yesterday, is the only master yet standing in the musical world? The avowal is valuable to note, coming from an adversary so convinced as Hanslick was but recently, and this brilliant conversion at the moment when efforts were being made to galvanize certain still-born operas of French musicians, should make the least prudent of writers reflect. But, what is the use of reflecting? Have not the French journalists always been born with learning and a peremptory voice, from the scorners of Gluck to

those of Wagner, not forgetting those of Mozart and Beethoven, of Weber and Berlioz?

The fact of Wagner's operas continuing to be proscribed in Paris would harm only the French amateurs very anxious to hear them, and as to Wagner, he will not suffer any more, after all, from this prolonged ostracism and these injurious criticisms, than his predecessors have suffered before him. If I could be shown wherein the glory of Weber and Beethoven was less great when they were ignored or violently criticised in France, I would readily admit that the judgment of our country had some importance, when opposed to all Europe; but the contrary has been uniformly observed in musical history, and we must confess that even the poetic and delicate Mendelssohn we received at first with a polished coolness. And was he, in his life time, any the less fêted in Germany, in England? Was he any the less appreciated, even in France, after his death?

Even though *Lohengrin* should be played with success in Paris, the latest brawlers could take refuge in the objection that this is not the true Wagner; that it would be necessary to try *Tristan and Isolde*, the *Meistersinger*, *Parsifal*, a work in which the author has fully realized his reforms of the lyric drama or opera, as one chooses to call it, and that these works would never become naturalized in Paris. It may be that *Parsifal*, less because of the music than the poem, is quite contrary to the ideas which a French public may form of a theatrical production. But it is quite different with *Tristan*, and especially with the *Meistersinger*, which will sometime force admiration from even French auditors, but not until they shall have been gradually prepared, and inured to the essentially praiseworthy theories of Richard Wagner. His art work is so different from the musical productions which rule the fashion in Paris that it will be some time before these theories shall have acquired the force of law; but this

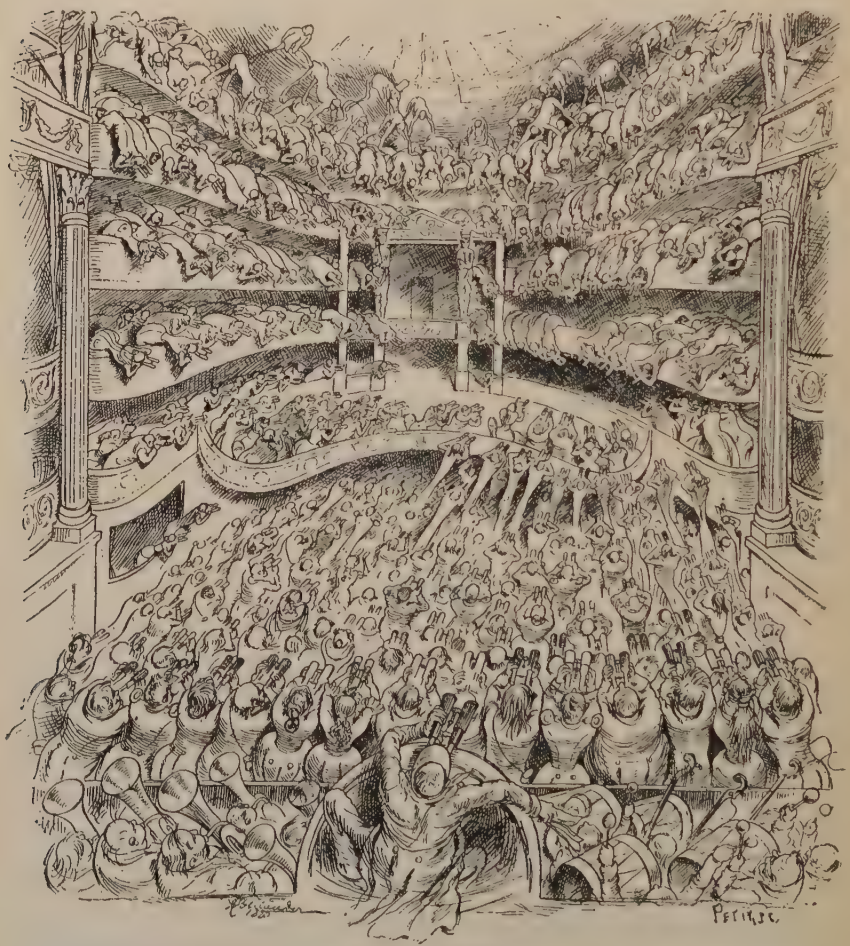
very slowness in imposing itself upon the taste of a nation is a guage of its durability, and the works which weigh the least in the balance of history are almost always those which the world has accepted at once with a blind infatuation, and which the independent spirits have had the most trouble in eradicating.

From this absolute union of poetry and drama aspired to and realized by Richard Wagner, from this complete fusion between the orchestra of Beethoven and the declaimed work of Gluck; from this symphony in one act, established on certain type-motives, which reappear, joined together and infinitely elaborated for the purpose of explaining and commenting on the drama; from this magnificent orchestral tissue above which runs the vocal melody, with a perfect declamation, without any repetition of words or conventional singing together; from all these elements brought together and blended in the brain of a great genius there has resulted an entirely new work of art, and one so contrary to the current productions that it is almost impossible to give an idea of it to those who know nothing about it.

Certain people have tried to do it by means of poetic amplification, and have had only a negative result. I have on this point the avowal of numerous converts, who would have reproached me some time ago for defending Wagner, when they were quite ignorant of him, and who, now, have no ears for any music but his; they never weary of admiring him, but confess that they do not know how to impart their delight to the generality of amateurs.

What would Berlioz have said of the *Nibelungen* and of *Parsifal*, he who so loudly disparaged *Tannhäuser* and who declared the prelude of *Tristan* an undecipherable enigma? Ah! poor Berlioz! it was his greatest mistake as a man and his gravest fault as an artist, to have misunderstood Wagner, to have worked against him with a bitter animosity. Blinded

by the spite which he felt at seeing his rival, his junior, a foreigner, bar to him the way to the Opera, where *Tannhäuser* seemed to take the place of the *Troyens*, he did not under-



REPRESENTATION OF AN OPERA IN THE PRESENCE OF THE "MASTER."
(Oberländer, *Fliegende Blätter*, Munich, 1880.)

stand that for the ignorant and imitative masses there was no difference between the two operas, between the two musicians, and that both would have much the same fate. In

working for the ruin of *Tannhäuser* he was preparing the defeat of the *Troyens*. This was a short-sighted and dishonorable act on his part. It is on him and his rancorous article that Wagner's last enemies still lean for support, whereas Wagner, in his writings, has never judged Berlioz sharply. It is true that Wagner, when he was ten years younger, had profited greatly from the innovations introduced by Berlioz in orchestral technique; but it was his right, and Berlioz, instead of injuring him, would have done much better if he had studied, investigated and turned to profit the admirable reforms attempted in the opera by a rival, who, if he had made himself his disciple in the art of instrumentation, had shown himself his master at the theatre.

Berlioz's warmest partisans are forced to recognize to-day that this denial of justice was a piece of signal unskillfulness, and the composer who has inherited the most from him, who watched over him, sustained him until death, and who guards his memory with a touching adoration, did not conceal the fact from the master whom he loved: "I am very sorry to tell you, my dear Berlioz, but the fall of *Tannhäuser*, to which you have ever so slightly contributed, has prepared the fall of the *Troyens*, a fall less noisy, less sudden, but no less real than the other. It had been better for you that *les Troyens* should enter the Opera after *Tannhäuser*, and even after *Lohengrin*, than not to enter at all."

It is the same writer who afterwards formulated in passionate terms a sentiment which is dear to me, as to him, and with which I will bring this long work to a close; moreover it is Richard Wagner who inspired the thought: "To place thus before a generation of living, thinking and working artists, these Herculean columns made of the bones of those who are dead, is to deny progress, is to wish to violently sever the chain whose links should multiply and extend to the most remote periods. These illustrious dead whom you acclaim

to-day, did they not live, for the most part, criticised, misunderstood, like those who are now living and being repulsed by you? O pious ones, thuriferous of the glories of the past, will you always forget that the innovators, that the romanticists of to-day become the classics of to-morrow? While Beethoven and Weber were living, did people not set up Haydn and Mozart against them, as you to-day oppose Beethoven and Weber to Wagner and Berlioz? Have you never thought that in a not distant future, for time goes quickly, Wagner and Berlioz will be the battering-rams with which people will storm some living contemporary celebrity? The classics! the classics! say you; let us hold to the classics! But Wagner and Berlioz, in a few years hence, will be classics! . . . Since how long has Mendelssohn been a classic? Only since his death."

This is the truth, that which is not to be spoken at all times, but which is bound to triumph sooner or later, however violently it may be resisted, however powerful may be the interests leagued against it. And the proof in this case is the fact that M. Reyer's prediction is already realized; to-day Berlioz is a classic, almost an ancient, and it is Wagner who sheds a dazzling radiance over the entire musical world.

RICHARD WAGNER IN "THE NIBELUNGEN RING."
The whole world is prostrate at his feet. (*German Caricature*, 1876.)

APPENDIX.

I

RICHARD WAGNER'S WORKS IN THE CONCERTS OF PARIS.

THE little work which is to follow is nothing more than a musical *memento*. It is full of titles, dates and proper names; but for that very reason, and because it is of an unquestionable historic precision, it will surely offer some interest to the people who are not content with merely listening to music from day to day, and who like, now and then, to take a backward glance in order to get a better idea of the road travelled over. Such is the spirit which has guided me in writing it; I flatter myself, moreover, that Wagner's most ancient detractors will find therein food for reflection.

The theatres have done nothing for Richard Wagner in France, and it is through the concerts that he has achieved an incontestable success and glory, even in Paris, he who was an essentially dramatic composer, and who regarded theatrical representation as absolutely necessary to the perfect comprehension of his works. What then was the reason of such a reversion as that produced in France? Simply the noisy break-down of *Tannhäuser* at the Opera. After that, indeed, no theatre manager would ever have thought of such a thing as bringing out any considerable part of one of Wagner's important works; — the futile attempt made in 1869 by M. Pasdeloup with *Rienzi*, if not against the will, at least, without the approbation of the author, could only justify this prudent abstention, — whereas a concert director, running no risk in trying an occasional selection, free to withdraw it if it displeased the public, was able to quietly help along the cause of the great musician.

Let us see then what these concerts have done, and by what slow stages they have succeeded in repairing the shameful affair of *Tannhäuser*. The nomenclature is long and dry, but its length and its dryness testify to the efforts, often fruitless, always repeated, which had to be made by orchestra leaders and partisans in the first days, in order to restore to him the place of honor to which he had a right in France, as well as in the whole musical world. Richard Wagner was little known in Paris until after the three concerts given by himself at the Italiens in January, 1860; he was generally scoffed at by us until after the *Tannhäuser* disaster in March, 1861. Dating from that day it is interesting to observe the progress of his works in France, from the day when almost everybody felt certain that neither he nor his works would ever be heard of again in Paris. I begin then with this period, after recalling, however, that Seghers had previously performed for the first time in Paris, the overture to *Tannhäuser*, in the concerts of the *Société Sainte-Cécile*, which he inaugurated at the Casino Paganini, rue de la Chaussée d'Antin; it was on Sunday, November 24, 1850. Therefore, I say, honor to Seghers!

But honor above all to M. Pasdeloup, Wagner's warmest defender in France, who persisted in playing the master's music in spite of the cries of opposition, and who defied the storms of public opinion with a prodigious obstinacy. He made his first attempts at the concerts of the *Société des jeunes artistes du Conservatoire*, at which he brought out one of Wagner's songs and had the betrothal march and chorus from *Lohengrin* played twice.

The Popular Concerts, originally installed at the *Cirque d'Hiver*, date from October 27, 1861 — the year of the *Tannhäuser* catastrophe, — and it was on the 10th of May, 1862, that the name of Richard Wagner made its first appearance on M. Pasdeloup's bills. This time the *Tannhäuser* march was played. Then followed a silence of three years. On March 5, 1865, the *Tannhäuser* overture was heard for the first time; wild commotion. He repeated it twice, however, before risking the prelude to *Lohengrin* (February 11, 1866), which was lost in a general disturbance. On March 7, 1866, other selections from *Lohengrin* passed almost without interruption. Add the overture to the *Flying Dutchman* (January 13, 1867), an

air from *Lohengrin* sung by M. Capoul (March 24, 1867), the overture to *Rienzi* (November 3, 1867), march from *Lohengrin* (February 9, 1868), some fragments from the third act of *Tannhäuser*, sung by M. Faure and Mlle. Nilsson on Good Friday, April 10, 1868, some short orchestral selections from the *Meistersinger* (October 18, 1868), the overture to the *Meistersinger*, hooted from beginning to end, so that it was not heard at all, the *Faust* overture (March 6, 1870); and you have a complete list of all of Wagner's works which M. Pasdeloup almost imposed upon his audience up to 1870, in the midst of clamorous cries and hisses which it was impossible to silence.

During the season 1873–74, M. Pasdeloup played several of these pieces again. On November 15, 1874, he played the prelude to *Tristan and Isolde;* then, after another year of silence he ventured, on October 29, 1876, the funeral march from the *Götterdämmerung*, which caused great excitement. The people were so much wrought up that he thought it wise not to risk anything of Wagner's for the next three years; then, after feeling his ground with the overture to the *Flying Dutchman* and the prelude to *Tristan*, he had the first act of *Lohengrin* performed three times, with great success (April 20, May 8 and 15, 1879); the rôles were taken by M. Prunet, Bacquié, Seguin, Piccaluga, Mlles. Juliette Rey and Caroline Brun.

After this the public wanted longer selections from Wagner's works. On February 6, 1881, M. Pasdeloup gave some fragments from the *Flying Dutchman*, sung by M. Lauwers, Mmes. Brunet-Lafleur and Rose Caron. On April 10, 1881, he gave selections from the third act of the *Meistersinger*, sung by Mmes. Panchioni and Caron, MM. Bolly, Lauwers and Lecor, and on May 28, Wotan's farewell to Brunhilda, sung by M. Faure. On December 11, 1881, came the fragments from *Tannhäuser* again, by M. Faure and Mme. Rose Caron. On January 15, 1882, the song *Dreams*, arranged by Wagner himself, and Walter's prize song from the *Meistersinger*, arranged by Wihelmj, were played on the violin by M. Waldemar Meyer. On February 5, Mme. Panchioni sung the finale scene of *Tristan*, and on April 7, Good Friday, the final chorus of the *Liebesmahle der Apostel* was heard for the first time.

On October 22, 1882, the prelude to *Parsifal* was played at the same time by MM. Colonne and Lamoureux. On January 28 and February 4, 1883, the first act of *Lohengrin* was again heard, and on February 11 and 18, a selection from *Parsifal* for the orchestra alone. This finishes the repertoire of Wagnerian works attempted at the *Cirque d'Hiver* of M. Pasdeloup; and it finished likewise the concerts themselves, since M. Pasdeloup, full of years and worn out by competition, after twenty-three years of service, then abandoned these excellent concerts, which did much for musical taste in France, and the popularity of which assured a lasting fame to their founder.

While the Popular Concerts were so shaken by the furious combats which were fought over Wagner's works, the Châtelet Concerts, founded in March, 1873, had not given a note of Wagner until February 1, 1880. On that day M. Colonne played the overture to *Tannhäuser*. During the following season he gave, at the first concert the overture to the *Flying Dutchman* (October 17, 1881); *Siegfried Idyll*, November 14, the *Ride of the Walküres*, which was to be one of the greatest successes at these concerts, January 23, February 6 and 13, 1881; then the prelude and finale to *Tristan*, for orchestra alone, April 15. On October 23 and 30, 1881, was given the Venusberg scene from *Tannhäuser;* on November 20 and 27 and December 4, long fragments from *Tannhäuser*, with MM. Bosquin and du Wast as Tannhäuser and Augues as Wolfram; on February 5 and 12, selection from *Rienzi*, sung by M. Stéphanne, Mlles. Marie Battu, C. Brun and Dihau; on March 26, fragments from *Tannhäuser*, with M. Faure for Wolfram.

On October 22, 1882, the prelude to *Parsifal* was played at the Châtelet; on November 5, *Huldigungsmarsch;* February 25 and March 4, 1883, there was a sort of Wagner festival, composed almost entirely of his works, with M. Lauwers and Mme. Rose Caron as soloists; then, on March 11, overture to the *Meistersinger*. During the season 1883–84 the preceding pieces reappeared; on January 20, a fragment of *Lohengrin*, sung by Mme. Schrœder (Elsa); then the grand finale of the first act of *Parsifal*, performed February 10 and March 2, 1884, followed the second production of Good Friday Spell, with M. Faure as Gurnemanz, and M. Mazalbert as Parsifal. On March 9, M. Faure sung again his favorite selections from *Tann-*

häuser, and M. Colonne closed the season (April 6), with the *Ride of the Walküres*, which continues to be the great Wagnerian success of the Châtelet Concerts.

At the reopening in the fall of 1884, M. Colonne brought out the *Faust* overture (November 2); then, on January 25 and February 1 and 8, he gave several selections from the *Walküre*: — Wotan's farewell to Brunhilda, sung by M. Soum, Siegmund's salute to the Spring, sung by M. Bosquin, and the inevitable *Walküres' Ride*, with vocal parts. At the opening of the following season M. Lauwers rendered Wotan's farewell (December 6 and 13), and M. Maurel and Mlle. Tanesi sung the duet from the second act of the *Flying Dutchman* at the concerts of February 7 and 14, 1886.

The Château-d'Eau Concerts, founded in October, 1881, have, from the first, been devoted to the triumph of Richard Wagner under the energetic influence of M. Lamoureux. During the first year he gave the overture to *Rienzi* (November 6 and 13); overture to the *Flying Dutchman* (November 20 and 27); cavatina from the *Flying Dutchman* sung by M. Guiot (December 11); overture and fragments of the *Meistersinger* for orchestra (December 18 and 25); overture to *Tannhäuser* (January 8 and 15, 1882); Spinning Chorus from the *Flying Dutchman* and Wedding March from *Lohengrin* (January 22, 29 and February 5); then four performances of the first act of *Lohengrin*, sung by MM. Schérie, Plançon, Henschling, Auguez, Mmes. Franck-Duvernoy and Gayet (February 12, 19, and 26, March 5, 1882); finally the grand duet from *Lohengrin*, by Mme. Franck-Duvernoy and M. Bosquin (March 19 and April 7) and a selection from *Tannhäuser* with M. Henschling as Wolfram (March 26). This was a very fair beginning.

At the opening of the second year the prelude of *Parsifal* was given (October 22 and 29, 1882); prelude to *Tristan* (November 5 and 12); introduction and prayer from *Rienzi* (January 14, 1883). The season was closed with a Wagner Festival (March 4 and 11) at which all the pieces above mentioned were played. The third winter, the funeral march from the *Götterdämmerung* was admirably rendered (January, 1884) and M. Lamoureux was obliged to give it four Sundays in succession. Then came the wonderful performances of the first act of *Tristan and Isolde*, sung by Mmes. Montalba and

Boidin-Puisais, MM. Van Dyck, Blauwaert and Mauguiere (March 2, 9, 16 and 23). These performances which fell upon Paris like a thunder-bolt, achieved the recognition and the consecration of Richard Wagner's genius by the enthusiastic French public. But M. Lamoureux was not to stop there. At the opening of the next season he played the *Grand Festival March*, composed for the United States centennial celebration (October 26, 1884) and repeated it at the two following concerts (November 9 and 16), adding on both occasions the *Faust* overture. He had the grand duet from *Lohengrin* sung three times, by Mme. Brunet-Lafleur and M. Van Dyck (December 7, 14, and 21); then, after bringing out once more the first act of *Tristan and Isolde*, he produced the second act twice, with M. Van Dyck, Mmes. Montalba and Boidin-Puisais as soloists (March 1 and 8, 1885). Finally, on Good Friday, April 3, he offered an attraction in the form of a concert composed exclusively of orchestral works by Wagner, previously heard. It was a brilliant success.

In the early part of the following season the orchestra played the *Siegfried Idyll* (November 29 and December 6), and M. Van Dyck sung Lohengrin's farewell (November 22 and 29) which he repeated twice more after the grand *Lohengrin* duet with Mme. Brunet-Lafleur. On February 14, these same two artists sung almost the entire first act of the *Walkure*, except the second scene with Hunding, and this performance was such a success that M. Lamoureux was obliged to repeat it February 21, 14 and March 21. At this last concert M. Lamoureux gave for the first time the *Ride of the Walkürcs*, for the orchestra, which he repeated on the four following Sundays. On Good Friday, April 23, he devoted his whole concert, as in the preceding year, to the works of Richard Wagner. Besides a number of well-known pieces, including the *Ride of the Walkürcs*, played for the fifth time, he gave the first hearing of the prelude to the third act of *Tristan and Isolde*, Good Friday Spell, from *Parsifal*, and the Voices of the Forest, from *Siegfried*. The house was crowded, and the enthusiasm very great.

During these twenty-five years from 1861 to 1886, what was being done by the *Société des concerts du Conservatoire?* On April 8, 1886, it risked the *Tannhäuser* march; February 16, 1868, it

played the Pilgrim Chorus, and January 24, 1869, it got so far as the religious march from *Lohengrin;* then, absolute silence for fifteen years. On January 20, 1884, it played again the religious march from *Lohengrin*, and at the Good Friday *concert spirituel*, April 11, it gave, for the first time, the *Tannhäuser* overture. The overture to *Tannhauser* for the first time in 1884! Thirty-nine years after the appearance of this master-piece at Dresden! *O, sacro-saint Conservatoire!* Finally, on January 31, 1886, —supreme audacity—the society actually gave the Spinning Chorus from the *Flying Dutchman*, after having tried, in secret, the Flower-maiden scene from *Parsifal*. M. Garcin would have asked nothing better than to make a little headway in order to mark his advent to the post of first orchestra leader; but the obstinacy of routine prevailed against his timid efforts.

And what is the manifest result to-day, unhoped for after the failure of *Tannhäuser*, of all these patiently repeated efforts? It is that the Parisian theatres are now anxious to play the works of Richard Wagner. The Opera-Comique repents of not having produced *Lohengrin*, known and admired by the whole world, and if it is so regretful, be assured it is because it was certain of finding in the opera heavy receipts and large profits; with theatre managers there is no other objective point. The Italian Theatre of the place du Châtelet, when at the end of its precarious existence, wanted to make a last fight for life by mounting hap-hazard in one week, the *Flying Dutchman*. Fortunately, the people who had full power to authorize such an enterprise, unhesitatingly refused to do so. The failure of the *Flying Dutchman*, brought out with a ridiculous *mise en scène* and a diabolical execution, would have lost in one evening all the results gained by twenty years of patient struggling.

It is nothing, people may say, that one act from *Tristan and Isolde* or from the *Meistersinger* should be heard in complete silence and covered at its close with wild applause. It is an important fact in the musical history of France, and its date will be remembered, for it marks the absolute recognition of Richard Wagner's genius by all French amateurs, except for the critics who had but lately committed themselves too far on the other side, and who found themselves obstinately holding their position all alone. It is comical and

sad at the same time to see these unfortunates desperately struggling against the current which is bearing them away and carrying them under. To-day, the production of *Lohengrin* in Paris is only a matter of a short time; little matter whether it be next winter or later. One can predict with certainty that this masterpiece will obtain the greatest possible success, and it is just this success which the composers at present installed in our lyric theatres fear and wish to delay.

Whatever they may say, do, or write, they are henceforth aware of the facts. There is nothing to be done but to bow before a colossal genius, and the longer one delays in doing it, the more he will be held up to ridicule by posterity.

II

COMPLETE CATALOGUE OF RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSICAL WORKS.[1]

1.— Dramatic Works.

Die Hochzeit, fragment of an opera; introduction, chorus and septet. Unpublished; autograph copy of the score, thirty-six pages, dated March 1, 1833, was presented by Wagner to the Musikverein of Wurzburg.

Die Feen, romantic opera in three acts; 1883. Never performed; the overture only was played at Magdeburg, 1834. Unpublished; original score in possession of the king of Bavaria.

Das Liebesverbot, music composed 1835–36. Performed once only, at Magdeburg, March 29, 1836. Original score in possession of the king of Bavaria. A song from the opera, *Carnevalslied*, was printed in Lewald's *Europa*, 1837, pp. 240, and pirated at Brunswick and Hanover.

Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen, grand tragic opera in five acts. Music begun at Riga in 1838. Acts I. and II. finished at Riga and at Mitau in 1839; Acts III. and IV. finished at Paris in 1840. First performance at Dresden, January 2, 1843. French translation by M. Ch. Nuitter.

[1] From Dannreuther's list in Grove's Musical Dictionary.

Der fliegende Hollander, romantic opera in three acts. Music written at Meudon, near Paris, in 1840. First performed at Dresden, January 2, 1843. French translation by M. Ch. Nuitter.

Tannhäuser, und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg, romantic opera, in three acts. Poem written at Dresden in 1843; score finished in 1844–45. First performed at Dresden, October 19, 1845. French translation by M. Ch. Nuitter.

Lohengrin, romantic opera in three acts. Poem written at Dresden in 1845; music begun September 9, 1846. Introduction written August 28, 1847; instrumentation of the whole work finished the following spring. First performed at Weimar, August 28, 1850. French translation by M. Ch. Nuitter.

Das Rheingold, Part I. of Der Ring des Nibelungen. Poem of the *Ring* begun at Dresden in 1848, written in inverse order (*Death of Siegfried, Siegfried, Walküre, Rheingold*); finished at Zurich in 1851–52. Music of the *Rheingold* begun in the autumn of 1853 at Spezzia; score finished in May, 1854. First performed at Munich, September 22, 1869.

Die Walküre, Part II. of Der Ring des Nibelungen, in three acts. Score finished at Zurich in 1856. First performed at Munich, June 26, 1870. French translation by M. Victor Wilder.

Tristan und Isolde, in three acts. Poem written at Zurich in 1857; music commenced in 1857. Score of the first act finished at Zurich during the autumn of 1857; second act, at Venice, in March, 1859; third act, at Lucerne, August, 1859. First performed at Munich, June 10, 1865. French translation by M. Victor Wilder.

Siegfried, Part III. of Der Ring des Nibelungen, in three acts. Music begun at Zurich, before *Tristan*. Act I. finished April 1857; part of Act II. written in 1857, finished at Munich, June 21, 1865; Act III. finished early in 1869. First performed at Bayreuth, August 16, 1876.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnburg, in three acts. Sketched in 1845; poem begun at Paris during the winter of 1861–62, published in manuscript in 1862; music begun in 1862; score finished October 21, 1867. First performed at Munich, June 21, 1868. French translation by M. Victor Wilder.

Götterdämmerung, Part IV. of Der Ring des Nibelungen (first

project for the *Death of Siegfried* dates from June, 1848). Music begun at Lucerne in 1870. Sketch of introduction to Act I. finished at Bayreuth, June 22, 1872. Orchestration finished November, 1874. First performed at Bayreuth, August 17, 1876.

Parsifal, ein Buhnenweihfestspiel, in three acts (first sketches of *Good Friday Spell* date from the year 1857, at Zurich). Poem written at Bayreuth in 1876-77. Sketch of the music begun at Bayreuth in 1877, finished April 25, 1879. Orchestration finished at Palermo, January 13, 1882. First performed at Bayreuth, July 26, 1882.

2.—Compositions for Orchestra, and Choruses.

Overture in B♭ (6–8). Unpublished. Score probably lost.

Overture in D minor (4–4). Unpublished. Performed at Leipsic, December 25, 1831. Score at Bayreuth.

Overture in C (concert overture in fugue form). Unpublished. Written in 1831; played at Leipsic, April 30, 1833, at Bayreuth, May 22, 1873.

Overture: *Polonia*, in C major (4–4). Unpublished. Written at Leipsic in 1832. Score at Bayreuth.

Symphony in C. Unpublished. Written at Leipsic in 1832, played at Prague during the summer of 1832, then at Leipsic, first by the *Euterpe Society* in December, 1832, afterwards at the Gewandhaus, January 10, 1833, finally at Venice, December 24, 1882.

New Year's Cantata (Introduction and two chorals). Unpublished. Performed at Magdeburg New Year's Eve, 1834–35, and at Bayreuth, May 22, 1873.

Columbus Overture. Unpublished. Composed and played twice at Magdeburg in 1835; played at Riga in 1838, and at Paris, February 4, 1841. After this last execution the score disappeared and has never been heard of since.

Incidental music — songs — to a *Zauberposse* by Gleich; *Der Berggeist, oder Die drei Wunsche*. Magdeburg, 1836. Unpublished. Manuscript probably lost.

Overture: *Rule Britannia*. Unpublished. Written at Koenigsberg in 1836. Score sent to London Philharmonic Society in 1840. Probably lost.

Faust Overture. Written at Paris in 1839–40. First played at Dresden, July 22, 1844. Rewritten in 1855.

Huldigungsmarsch. Composed in 1864. Published in 1869. Original score, for military music, still in manuscript. The version published for the usual grand orchestra was commenced by Wagner and finished by Raff.

Siegfried Idyll. Composed in 1870, published in 1877.

Kaisermarsch, 1871.

Grosser Festsmarsch for Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, 1876.

Das Liebsmahl der Apostel, biblical scene for male chorus and grand orchestra, 1843.

Gelegenheits Cantata, for the unveiling of a bronze statue of king Frederick Augustus at Dresden, June 7, 1843. Unpublished.

Gruss an den König. Given at Dresden, August 9, 1844, and published the same year in this city; first, for four male voices, second, as a song with piano accompaniment.

An Weber's Grabe : first, Funeral March for wind instruments, on motives from *Euryanthe*; second, double quartet for the voice, 1844. Score No. 2 published in 1872.

3. — Compositions for Piano.

Sonata in B♭. Written in 1831, published in 1832.

Polonaise in D, for four hands. Written in 1831, published in 1832.

Fantasia in F♯ minor. Unpublished. Written in 1831.

Album Sonata in E♭, for Frau Mathilde Wesendonck. Written in 1853, published in 1877.

Albumblätt in C, for Fürsten Metternich. Composed in 1861, published in 1871.

Albumblätt in E♭, for Frau Betty Schott. Composed January 1, 1875, published in 1877.

4. — Songs.

Carnivalslied, taken from *Das Liebesverbot*, 1835–36. Reprinted at Brunswick in 1855.

Dors, mon enfant; Mignonne, Attente, songs composed at Paris in 1839–40. Published as Musikbeilagen to Lewald's *Europa* in 1841 and 1842. Republished with German translation in 1871.

The two Grenadiers, from Heine, dedicated to him, Paris, 1839. Music fitted to the French version.

Der Tannenbaum, 1840. Published in 1871.

Kraft Liedchen (Hotel de Prusse, April 22, 1871). A little humorous vote of thanks to his host, Herr Ludwig Kraft of Leipsic.

Fünf Gedichte: 1, *Der Engel;* 2, *Stehe still;* 3, *Im Treibhaus* (*Studie zu Tristan und Isolde*); 4, *Schmerzen;* 5, *Träume* (*Studie zu Tristan und Isolde*, 1862). English translation by Francis Hueffer.

5. — Arrangement, etc.

Gluck. *Iphigenie en Aulide*, arranged by Richard Wagner; piano arrangement by Hans von Bülow, published in 1859. Score of *Coda* to the overture published in 1859.

Mozart. *Don Juan*, with rearranged dialogue and recitatives.

Palestrina. *Stabat Mater*, with directions for execution. Score published in 1877.

Allegro zu der Arie des Aubrey, in dem Vampyr von Marschner (in F minor). Score, 142 bars of additional text and music, instead of the 58 bars of the original, dated Würzburg, September 23, 1833, in the possession of Herr W. Tappert, Berlin.

Beethoven. *Ninth Symphony*, piano arrangement, 1831. Unpublished.

Donizetti. *La Favorite*, piano arrangement, Paris.

Donizetti. *L'Elisir d'amore*, piano arrangement.

Halévy. *La Reine de Chypre*, piano arrangement, Paris, 1841.

Halévy. *Le Guittarero*, piano arrangement, Paris, 1841.

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